

LEFT OVER, LEFT OUT, AND LEFT BEHIND: INCORPORATING  
YOUNG ADULTS INTO SIGNIFICANT LEADERSHIP  
POSITIONS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

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## CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	
DEDICATION.....	
INTRODUCTION.....	
CHAPTER	
1. MINISTRY FOCUS.....	
2. BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	
Old Testament	
New Testament	
3. HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	
4. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	
5. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS.....	
6. PROJECT ANALYSIS.....	
Introduction	
Methodology	
Implementation	
Summary of Learning	
Conclusions	
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	

## **ABSTRACT**

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by

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The project sought to develop or adapt a model that would incorporate young adults, primarily between the ages of 18-35 into the significant leadership positions (i.e. Stewards, Trustees, and Ministers) within New Mt Zion AME Church, Tallahassee, Florida. Qualitative research method was utilized with a combination of Bible Studies, Sermon series, shadow mentorship, and interviews. The project revealed that young adults have the energy and capacity as well as desire to serve, but there are inherent barriers that prevent them from getting significant leadership positions. The conclusion presented a model that promotes an environment that gives opportunities to serve for young adults to serve effectively in high-level leadership capacities.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

Firstly, without God none of who I am would be possible; to God be the Glory! My deepest appreciation and profound respect goes to my beautiful wife of nine years, Shawana Alicia Elwood for her love, support, prayers and dedication not only in marriage but also throughout this process. She is the greatest Christian that I know! The Gospel is not just what she preaches, it what she lives. “Lady E” I love you forever for who you are and what you mean to my life and our darling children. To my children; Kaylin Alyse and Anton Gerald II (“Tony”), you are the joy of my life! You are the manifestation of the grace and mercy of the Lord upon my life. The both of you give me drive, determination and add meaning to my life. Kaylin you are so beautiful, talented and anointed! You are a straight “A” student and I am extremely proud of you. Tony, you were born during my time in the D.Min program. I was concerned about making you my namesake because I always wanted you to have your own identity and not think you have to do what I do because you bare my name. From the time you were born you have eased any doubt that you would have your own identity. You are the one and only Tony! I love watching you grow everyday and I am excited about the many profound ways God is going to use you.

A special thanks to my parents; Gerald and Lynette Elwood. You have supported me in every single phase of my ministry and I am grateful.

To the church that I have been charged to lead: New Mt Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church, “The City of the Great King.” There is no greater church on the planet earth or mars. You are the impetus this project. To you who assisted with this project or process I love you to pieces. I have served you for 7 years as your pastor and my leadership would be nothing without your “followship!”

A spirited thanks to my mentors, Dr. Keith Donaldson D. Lawrence and Dr. Kenneth E. Marcus. When I enrolled in the D.Min program at United I signed up for another focus group. After sitting in that focus group for ten minutes I knew that it was not the one for me. The Lord alone led me to you as mentors! The most difficult part about the completion of this program is leaving the vivid discussions of our focus group. The camaraderie of this group has been second to none other experience that I have shared in ministry thus far. The both of you along with the members of our focus group have been life changing for my ministry and I will never forget the times that we shared! Also, a special not to Dr. Donnell J. Moore and Dr. Angela Washington for your assistance is seeing this work to completion.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this endeavor to each and every person who has a drive for something greater. I didn't go to the best schools in middle school or high school, the truth is I was not academically driven. I had no clue what was going to become of my life. One of the best things that ever happened to me was the call of God to preach the Gospel. This call truly set my life on course spiritually and academically and caused me to have the desire to pursue all that I could in preparation to serve God's people. I must also make a special acknowledgement to my cousin Davlin Marshall and my only sister Monique (Elwood) Brown. They blazed the trail in our family for pursuing a college education and I found myself simply doing what I saw them do. I am grateful for their example. My beautiful Grandparents David and Cemyrtle , along with my Great-Grandmother Lucinda Newell; I miss all of you! I wish my kids would have had the opportunity to meet you. My time with you causes me to remain grounded in spite of everything that I accomplish.

I also want to dedicate this work, to my parents. My Father, Gerald, has always been the rock of our family. I am grown and have my own family and you are still the strongest man that I know, I still think there is not a question that you cannot answer, I still think there is nothing that you are afraid of and that bravery is what I seek to imitate in my own life and ministry. You have always been our very own superhero and I love you for your Godly example and the intestinal fortitude that you have shown to all of us for all of our lives. My Mother, Lynette, has always kept it all together. Like the seamstress that you are, our family has been skillfully woven together with skilled hands. Your prayers,



ingenuity, and quiet strength has kept it all together for years and I would be nothing without you.

Shawana, Kaylin and Tony, everything is always for you!

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this doctoral project is to create of model for seamlessly incorporating young adults into significant leadership positions at New Mt. Zion AME Church in Tallahassee, Florida (NMZAMEC). This study should allow the membership to embrace young adults as being worthy and qualified to serve in significant leadership capacities while allowing the leadership to mirror the young adult demographic within the congregation. The truth is, on many occasions, young adults are often left out, left over and left behind in an atmosphere that is supposed to be welcoming to all. The goal of this project is to reveal a more welcoming climate to young adults by elevating their colleagues to decision making positions within the church that allow their voices to be heard and their issues to be at the table when programming decisions are being made. The results of this project will be incorporated within the leadership manual at New Mt Zion. It will also be used as a part of the new member curriculum.

It is common within the connectional African Methodist Episcopal Church to reserve significant leadership roles (i.e. Stewards and Trustee) for senior adults or for adults that can make a significant financial contribution to the local church. There is a climate that suggests that young adults leadership should be relegated to youth ministry and or hip hop summits that are programmed specifically for their age brackets. The young adult steward and or trustee are generally frowned upon for fear of not being prepared or seasoned enough to serve in such a great capacity. Stewards and trustees are

coveted positions and any position given to a young adult is viewed as a wasted opportunity for a vested individual to serve. It is important for the church to get on board and begin to see the importance of allowing young adults to serve in these significant capacities as a means of connecting with individuals who will secure the vitality of the local church for years to come. The AME denomination has taken note of a mass exodus of the young adult population in many congregations across the connectional church. It is the intention of this project to provide a solution to the problem of mass exodus and cause mass influx.

NMZAMEC is located in Tallahassee, Florida. Florida's capital city boasts of three major institutions of higher learning: Florida State University, Florida A&M University, and Tallahassee Community College. These three institutions have secured Tallahassee's status as a college town. It is inevitable that many sanctuaries be inundated with college-aged individuals every Sunday morning. NMZAMEC is no exception. Three (3) Sunday Morning services serve nearly 1,000 individuals with the 11:30 a.m. worship service (the 3<sup>rd</sup> service) being predominately young adults. An interesting element to the city is not everyone leaves the city once they finish with their undergraduate degrees. Many of them settle in the city and a great deal further, their education through post-graduate studies. Embracing these individuals is a pivotal element to the survival of the churches in the area. Incorporating qualified, competent and spirit-filled individuals into steward/trustee positions in the church can only foster an environment that exemplifies a welcoming atmosphere. There is a necessity to infuse young adult leadership into each and every facet of the church. The problem is that the leadership in many if not all of the ministries

including those that we are focusing on in this study is all inundated with those that are dreaming dreams rather than seeing visions.

This project is based on the hypothesis that if the majority of the congregation embraces young adults in significant leadership roles then a more accepting environment will emerge that will cause other young adults to become active in the church. The expected results will foster an influx of young adults that will lead to the longevity of NMZAMEC and its vital role in the community. It will also give rise to the untapped potential and untapped people as well as resources that will help the forge a productive ministry based environment. Finally, it will open the minds of those that have held leadership positions for many years so that they will embrace new ideas and a refined approach for reaching all generations. This project solicited the participation of the entire church, and was led and facilitated by the senior pastor, peer associates and context associates of the New Mt Zion AME Church in Tallahassee, Florida.

Chapter one focuses on my spiritual journey. Chapters two through five focus on the biblical, historical, theological, and theoretical foundations that support this project. Chapter six provides the project analysis to include data analysis, methodology, summary of learning and concluding thoughts.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **MINISTRY FOCUS**

New Mt. Zion AME Church, located in the city of Tallahassee, Florida is one of the most intergenerational AME Churches in the state of Florida. Ministry at New Mount Zion is being done in a way that many people in the AME denomination and especially in the state have never seen before. People's lives are consistently being changed because of the work of ministry that goes on at New Mt. Zion. The church has become an influential name in the community and many of the outreach programs serve as pillars of strength and assist with the holistic development of the members of the church and the community that it serves. New Mount Zion is an amazing place to worship and with the help of God, good leadership and hard work; New Mount Zion can become even better. There are many dimensions that help make this ministry powerful. With over twenty different ministries, each one does its part to build the entire make-up of the church. New Mt. Zion Church has been thoroughly studied to position it to become a vital and sustainable congregation today and in the future. Staying informed with current trends and cutting edge growth methods ensures that the congregation is clear about God's expectations and direction forward. Developing solid relationships with the congregation makes the work of ministry exciting as the church strives to reach the pinnacle of excellence.

One of the most difficult aspects of serving New Mt Zion is negotiating the intergenerational reality that exists among its members. The church's active membership

goes from ages zero to age ninety-five. Tallahassee serves two major universities, Florida A&M University, and Florida State University and a community college that is as big as many state universities. Because of this, the college population at New Mt. Zion is one that overflows. On any given Sunday at New Mt. Zion, we may serve more than 600 college students. It is a tremendous blessing to see so many young people coming to worship God without any coercion. It is important therefore, that the church meets the needs of these young people to have a worship experience that allows them to be able to come to Jesus just as they are, without fear of judgment or criticism. The gospel must be taught and preached to demonstrate that Jesus saves, heals, and delivers people no matter their age. Through New Mt. Zion, many have learned that it is never too early to give their hearts, minds, bodies, and souls to Jesus the Christ. Many of the college students have said that had it not been for New Mt Zion, they would have not made it through their college years.

It is an extreme blessing to be able to serve such a variety of ages. Each Sunday, the young and young at heart file into the sanctuary to lay their burdens on the altar and sing praises to Almighty God with uplifted voices. With the challenge of serving the young, there is also a challenge of serving the old. The senior saints have historical knowledge of the church, making it difficult for relevant change to occur. Sometimes they do not have justifiable reasons for maintaining the status quo of the historical church. Often times, it is simply because “it is the way things have always been done.” Because of this mentality, it is hard to modernize people that fall in the senior saint age category. While change is good and necessary for the continued growth of the church, the senior saints are embraced and included in structuring worship. In as much as young people

should come to church and feel welcomed, the same should hold true for older people. All members of the church should be able to come and join in the activities of the church without feeling left behind or shut out. Senior saints at New Mt. Zion are beneficial for the building up of the body. The younger people need to see, not just hear about, the mothers of the church praying and the older men working around the church as an example of what to do and how to do it.

There is an age that is in between the young and the old. This is the age that was difficult to place, at first. We established ministries that were geared toward the young. We also established ministries and outings that were geared toward the old. But, the struggle has been with engaging the middle-aged crowd. These are the people who are in the working class raising children or recently become empty nesters. Developing a 9:30 a.m. worship service caters to this age group and many others who come as a family unit. Through this service, many middle-aged people sought out other sub-ministries in the church and became more active in various groups, auxiliaries, and committees.

Bringing all of these ages together is a burdensome joy. We have worked tirelessly to make sure that everyone's cares and concerns are met in the best way possible. It is extremely hard for every age group to be heard, but we do our best in making sure we try. Sometimes we succeed in those endeavors and there have been other times that we have failed. The church leadership works tirelessly to make people aware that their cares and concerns are being properly managed for the good of the whole body. Often times, people understand that there are a lot of voices to be heard and considered so they are extremely patient and supportive. There are other times that people are impatient

and disgruntle and no matter what is done, they will find something to complain about. Balancing impatience and disgruntled members is an ongoing challenge.

God has equipped me to be the pastor of such a church. When I was in seminary at the Interdenominational Theological Center, I studied pastoral care and counseling. These classes taught how to empathize with people and their needs. Sometimes people just need a listening ear without feeling judged. As pastor, young and old download many of their burdens and problems through counseling.

I was among the youngest in my graduating class at seminary and undergrad. Being one of the youngest forced me to look at things from older people's perspectives. It forced me to mature quicker than most, even when I did not want to. I did not realize it then, but this was all preparing me to be a lead servant at a large church that would be populated by people who were generations older than me. It also taught me to be confident in my spiritual gifts. Now, I can stand confidently and gracefully and pastor a church that has all different age groups and understand that I was born to do this, never being intimidated or fearful that God will not always come to my aid when I need God the most.

Working at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia as chaplain really changed my life. From the beginning, I would have never thought chaplaincy would be a critical part of shaping my ministry. While working at the hospital, it was my job to assist with families in crisis, in the midst of trauma. There I saw the death of infants, young, middle-aged, and old regularly. The death pager would sometimes go off three or four times in one night. It was my job to assist families identifying the bodies of their loved ones or pray with them as loved ones transitioned from this life to the next. From this experience,



I learned that death was real. At any given moment on any given day, life could be over for one person and life could change drastically for another in that same moment. I learned not to take life for granted because no one knows when trauma could sit in their family's living room. As unfair as it seemed to have to pull the covers back from a lifeless child's face, it showed me that life or death is no respecter of persons. This reality caused me to live on purpose and teach others to do the same.

Pastoring at New Mt. Zion, I try to create a learning atmosphere; an atmosphere that teaches people that all of us have fallen and will fall short of the glory of God. The important thing is not that we fall, but when we do, we must get back up and fight a little harder than before. I try to teach the people through everything that we do at New Mt. Zion that hard work pays off and that when we will live on purpose, the fruits of that labor will, in time, pay off. I know this to be true in my life and in the lives of those I pastor.

Every step of my life and ministry has been building blocks for what I am doing in this present moment. It is only now that I have come to fully understand that "the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord." The church I pastored before this, though not as big, was in some ways, a lot more challenging. The people have different mindsets at New Mt. Zion, and for the most part, are there to work and serve God and the people God has blessed us with. At my previous appointment, serving God and people was sometimes not the general idea of what was supposed to be happening. Therefore, I spent a lot of my time pastoring people who wanted to pastor themselves or who would not be pastored by me. I learned something in those moments to let God be God. Often times, I had to allow God to be my avenger. God did. So, when I got to New Mt. Zion, I decided

that I would give it everything that I had but I would never lose sight of whose church New Mt. Zion really was. I would never again try to pastor people who would not be pastored. This allows much less aggravation and stress. It also continues to keep me focused on what God desires, which is kingdom building and kingdom ministry. I try to focus my heart, mind, and soul on the things that I can work to change. I let God deal with the things and the people that I cannot. I have not always had that mentality; rather it came with spiritual growth and maturity.

It is my desire for New Mt. Zion to grow beyond my imagination. I know that in order for it to continue to grow, that all generations continue to see their worth at the church. We need to ensure that every ministry is thriving and in full effect. People will come and go because of the transient population we serve, but we are striving for a level of consistency so that even when a particular ministry has to change leadership, it does not mean that the ministry has to plummet. This is especially my desire for the youth ministry at New Mt. Zion since this is the ministry that has taken the hardest hits as it relates to decline due to change in leadership.

During my tenure as a doctor in ministry student, it is my desire to learn to be the kind of pastor that reaches and keeps all ages. I want to know all there is about serving a congregation that is uniquely and vividly different. It is my aspirations to learn about as many ministries as possible that will successfully guide me in the right direction of how to pastor a church and reach a world through encouraging and promoting difference and change from a modern-day generation that will never forget the generations that were before us.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS**

Young adults within any system or organization stand the best chance of providing stellar leadership and making productive impact. A strong case can be made that historically and scripturally; young adults have always been productive leaders as well as change agents within a particular culture, organization, and system, which also includes the church. A great case can be made that young adults have always been on the cutting edge of Leadership and have provided poise and dedication in some of the most difficult times in history. Unfortunately, however in some connectional church models and local church systems there exist a glass ceiling that prevents young adults from serving in highly touted leadership capacities.

Ageism has forced young adults into particular appointments and particular roles in local churches that suggest that should grow into significant leadership roles. Though, if given the chance it is highly possible that young adults will thrive and cause the church body to thrive, young adults are often placed into roles that are dead-ends at best. Young adults are often maligned, cast aside, marginalized, degraded, and politically abused. On the connectional level they receive opposition from many senior leaders, which may not be colleagues in experience but are definitely colleagues in credentials. On the local level, young adults are classified based on how much money they do or do not bring to the table. Senior members of most churches are extremely territorial and will share at a moments notice, there years of dedicated and tireless service to a particular ministry

without realizing that that statement alone can serve as evidence as to why young adults need to be in leadership positions.

The Bible text proves that young adults have always made their mark in a particular culture and society from leadership responsibilities to servanthood. The Bible is a book about purpose. It does not teach people to find jobs. It teaches people to do what God created them to do. With that being the case, the Bible does not wait until someone reaches legal age before it talks to them about the will of God. The Bible speaks to everyone, young and old, about finding and doing the will of God. The purpose message of the Bible resonates in the hearts and minds of young people and those who teach purpose principles are doing a great deal to equip youth for a successful and fulfilling life.<sup>1</sup>

### **Old Testament**

A cursory look at the pages of the sacred text would indicate a rich legacy of young people serving God in significant ways. Jeremiah, Daniel, Mary (Mother of Jesus), Samuel, David, Timothy, Ruth, and Jesus all served with distinction according to the biblical narrative. For the purpose of this project, we will focus on the story of David from the Old Testament and Timothy in the New Testament.

The story of how David becomes king over Israel at a young age begins with God and Samuel, who had the responsibility of speaking for God. Prior to David being selected, Saul was the reigning king but because Saul rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord rejected him as king. In the midst of victory over the Amalekites by Saul and his

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<sup>1</sup> John Stanko, "Never Too Young for Purpose," accessed June 23, 2015, <http://www.purposequest.com/assets/pdfs/misc/purpose/too-young-for-purpose.pdf>.

army, Samuel was given the task of going to Saul and rendering God decision. In the midst of Samuel's mournful depression, God gave him a word of motivational reproof (cf. Ex 10:3, 7; Nm 14:27; 1 Sm 1:14; 2 Sm 2:26; 1 Kgs 18:21) and a job to do, one that Youngblood terms "the capstone to Samuel's career." Perhaps to dispel doubts that may have arisen in the prophet's mind, the Lord first confirmed the stern prophetic word spoken by Samuel against Saul, the most powerful man in Israelite society: "I have rejected him as king over Israel" (v. 1). Having said this, God then gave the prophet a divine mission spelled out in specific terms. Samuel was first to "fill" an animal horn flask with specially prepared olive oil (cf. Ex 30:23–25). Then he was to take it along on a journey "to Jesse of Bethlehem" for a specific reason: Samuel was to anoint "one of his sons to be king."<sup>2</sup>

Samuel's task was simple yet dangerous. As Israel's kingmaker and most esteemed servant of the Lord, Samuel's actions were of great interest to Saul. If Samuel were to make an unexpected journey, especially one to a location outside of his normal judicial circuit, it would likely be reported to the king. Saul would then certainly view Samuel's actions for what they were—a threat to Saul's own claim to the throne. Consequently, the Lord gave Samuel an additional task that would help mask the central purpose of his trip to Bethlehem. Samuel was to make a sacrifice in that region and would "take a heifer" along for that purpose. As a Levitical judge, Samuel was authorized to sacrifice such an animal as part of a ritual that atoned for an unsolved murder

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<sup>2</sup> Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, vol. 7, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996).

committed in a rural region (cf. Dt 21:1–9). Thus Samuel’s journey to a rural region with a sacrificial animal accompanying him would not have raised undue suspicions.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the elders “trembled” at the sight of Samuel because they interpreted Samuel’s arrival with a heifer as an indication that a murder had occurred in their territory and that a legal action was being initiated; Youngblood suggests the elders were “awed by his formidable reputation,” established in part by his recent execution of Agag. In preparation for the sacrifice Samuel instructed the elders to “consecrate” themselves, that is, to place themselves in a condition of ritual cleanness. Ritual cleanness normally involved bathing, putting on clean clothes, the temporary suspension of all sexual activity, as well as avoidance of contact with any dead body. Samuel then went to the house of Jesse, where he personally invited him and his sons to the sacrifice and oversaw their consecration. In an unspecified amount of time later, Samuel began the anointing ceremony, the central purpose of his trek to Bethlehem. However, as this event began, the prophet was portrayed not knowing the Lord’s will; this is the only time in biblical narrative when Samuel was shown in this uncomfortable position. Samuel was forced, therefore, to initiate the search for “the man after the Lord’s heart” with only the use of his own insight. When he “saw Eliab,” Jesse’s firstborn son (cf. 17:13), he was impressed by “his appearance or his height” (v. 7) and concluded that “the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord” (v. 6). After all, Samuel had previously been led by God to anoint an individual who possessed exceptional height (cf. 10:23).<sup>4</sup>

Before Samuel could uncork the horn and pour oil on Eliab’s head, the Lord ended his silence. First, he informed Samuel that Eliab had been rejected as Israel’s next

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<sup>3</sup> Bergen, *I, 2 Samuel*.

<sup>4</sup> Bergen, *I, 2 Samuel*.

king. Then, in a particularly memorable statement the Lord uttered one of the most important statements in all of Scripture regarding divine concerns and human capacities. God first affirmed his fundamental “otherness”: “the Lord does not look at the things man looks at” (v. 7). Neither the Lord’s considerations nor his abilities are the same as those of humans; whereas “man looks at the outward appearance” (lit., “the eyes”), “the Lord looks at the heart.” The Lord alone has the capacity to observe and judge a person’s “heart” (Hb. *lēb*), that is, one’s thoughts, emotions, and intents. On God’s scales these matters outweigh all other aspects of a human life. The firstborn having been rejected, “Jesse called Abinadab” (v. 8), his second born (17:13), “and had him pass in front of Samuel.” But he, like his younger brother “Shammah” (v. 9), was “not chosen.” In fact, though four additional sons of Jesse passed in front of Samuel for possible anointing, the Lord had “not chosen these” (v. 10) either.<sup>5</sup>

The prophet’s experience seemed to contradict his revelation, and it resulted in a perplexing situation. On the one hand, the Lord revealed that he had chosen a son of Jesse to be king (v. 1); on the other hand, he had rejected every son paraded before Samuel. In an effort to resolve the confusion, Samuel asked Jesse if he had any other sons. As it turned out, Jesse’s “smallest” (Hb. *haqqāṭān*; NIV, “youngest”) son had been excluded from the event; he was out “tending the sheep” (v. 11).

Samuel's reaction to the appearance of Eliab is according to the MT translated as “Surely the LORD's anointed is before him” (RSV). In P the words of Samuel are *kwāteh dmāryā msīheh*. The analysis of these words requires an exact knowledge of the Syriac idiom of P, but it is not problematic: *kwat-* is the regular form with suffix pronouns of the preposition (y)k “as, like”, *kwateh* means “like him.”

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<sup>5</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*.

The syntagm preposition-suffix + ܐ/-noun is normal, with longer prepositions, when the noun is definite and has an important status in the context; *akwāteh dmāryā* means "like the Lord, similar to the Lord." The whole clause must be rendered: "similar to the Lord is his Messiah," "The Lord's Messiah is like him himself. In the light of this, it is clear that the meaning of the Syriac diverges from that of the MT. But how shall we account for P's text? First, it is unlikely that P is an interpretation of the MT. The difference in meaning between "he stands before him "(MT) and "he is like him "(P) is simply too great. Also, we would expect an interpretation to be more transparent than the text it purports to interpret, whereas in this verse P's text stands more in need of commentary than the MT.<sup>6</sup>

Jesse's description of the omitted son—David—as "smallest" places him in strong contrast to the rejected king. Since the Lord had just told Samuel not to consider "his height" (v. 7), the prophet was predisposed to interpret this description positively and perhaps as an indicator that the small shepherd would indeed be the Lord's anointed. With urgency he requested that Jesse's remaining son be brought in.<sup>7</sup>

God rebukes Samuel saying, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him," then, according to the MT: *kilo seryiPeh hā ādām*. These last words are problematic; maybe they must be rendered "for (what matters is) not what man sees." P reads in this place *lā hwīt gēr a(y)k dhāze (^)nāsā*. Against, the analysis of these words is not exactly simply but it can be made without problems: *lahwīt* is the 1st person, so to speak, *oilāhwā*, and the regular negation of non-verbal clauses in

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<sup>6</sup> Jan Joosten, "Vetus testamentum," 41 no. 2, Apr 1991: 226-233 in ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, Ebsco; accessed June 23, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, vol. 7.



Syriac. In P this negation is always declined in accordance with the subject of the clause; e.g. "I am not a prophet" is rendered *lā hwīt nbīa* (Zech, xiii 5). *la hwīt* does not imply past tense or "becoming," but simply the negation of a nonverbal clause. *gēr* corresponds to *kī*, but takes of necessity the second position in the clause. *a(y)k dhāzw (\*)nāsā* "as man sees."<sup>8</sup>

Thus the clause is to be rendered: "For I am not as man sees." This text is not a translation of the MT, which does not contain even a hint of a 1st person pronoun (in what follows the 3rd person is used to refer to God). Neither is it clear how P could be an interpretation of the MT. Though the MT is not clear, it gave the translator no cause to introduce a 1st person (pronoun or verb). Therefore, that here, as in v. 6, the Syriac must be explained as being based on a variant Hebrew text. The following is a possible retroversion of the Syriac into Hebrew: *kī /o° Kaiser yiPeh hā^ādām ^a nī (^anôkī)*, "I am not similar to what man sees." The interpretation of this clause in the context is not too difficult: I am not like anything man can see; therefore, if you say that Eliab is "similar/complementary" (hneged) to me on the basis of what your eyes see, you are mistaken; my likeness is not a matter of beauty or physique.<sup>9</sup>

When David was brought in from the field, his favorable physical traits were immediately obvious: he was first of all "ruddy" (v. 10; Hb *'admônî*), either possessing red-tinted hair or a bronze complexion; he possessed "a fine appearance" (lit., "beauty of eyes"); and he was "handsome." However—especially in light of verse 7—these physical assets were no proof that David was God's choice; at best they were irrelevant. What mattered was the young man's heart, and only God could judge that. The Lord removed

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<sup>8</sup> Joosten, "Vetus testamentum," 228.

<sup>9</sup> Joosten, "Vetus testamentum," 228.

all suspense from the situation with his word to Samuel: “Anoint him; he is the one.” Obediently, Samuel opened the “horn of oil” (v. 12) and decanted its contents on David’s head before his brothers and the elders of Bethlehem. The shapeless, invasive fluid used in the ceremony served fittingly as a symbol of the mystical presence of God. As the oil worked its way into the individual’s hair and pores, it symbolized the divine presence entering into the one being anointed.

After looking at Jesse’s seven sons, Samuel at last found the man of God’s choice, a man after God’s own heart (13:14). It’s interesting that David (“beloved”) was number eight, because in scripture, eight is often the number of a new beginning. God did use David to bring a new beginning to Israel, both governmentally and spiritually. In scripture, only prophets, priests, and kings were anointed, and the anointing had to be performed by a person authorized by the Lord. In biblical imagery, oil can symbolize the Holy Spirit and the endowment of His power upon His servants (Zec 4). The Hebrew word “Messiah” and the Greek word “Christ” both mean “anointed.” The Spirit of God came upon young David in great power, and ever after that, David was God’s man, but at the same time, the Spirit of God departed from Saul (1 Sm 16:14). Without the power of the Spirit, the servant of God is helpless to do the will of God and glorify Christ. As we abide in Christ, we receive the power we need, for Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5, NKJV).<sup>10</sup>

When David, the youngest of the sons in Jesse’s family (cf. 1 Chr 2:13–15), was selected as the Lord’s anointed, he joined a venerable crowd of Torah patriarchs selected by God in a way that confounded social norms. Other men who were not firstborn but

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<sup>10</sup> Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Successful*, “Be” Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor/Cook Communications, 2001).

who were selected by the Lord over their more socially powerful older brothers include Seth, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Ephraim, Moses, and perhaps Abraham. It seems that the biblical record deliberately creates the impression that Yahweh prefers to use disenfranchised members of society—earlier in 1 Samuel the barren woman Hannah and the child Samuel—to do his most significant work (cf. Mk 10:31; 1 Cor 1:27).<sup>11</sup>

How much did David's father and brothers understand about this anointing? In view of David's subsequent association with King Saul, perhaps they interpreted the event as a consecration for David's special service to the king. It's likely that Samuel privately told David that he had been chosen by the Lord to be the next king. If so, his behavior while serving Saul was remarkably mature for a young man whom one day would wear the crown. No doubt it was the assurance of this future hope that helped to keep David faithful during the ensuing years of trial and persecution. But his trials and testing during those wilderness years helped to build his faith, develop his godly character, and prepare him for the ministry that God had planned for him.<sup>12</sup>

### **New Testament**

The New Testament passage chosen is 1 Timothy 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be than an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Paul expressed some of the emphases that were to characterize Timothy's ministry in 4:12–16. First, Timothy was to live as a spiritual example of what a believer truly can be. His practice of godliness and the demonstration of Christian

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<sup>11</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 177–180.

<sup>12</sup> Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, 177–180.

character could compensate for the lack of calendar years. The term “example” signifies a pattern or a model. Paul desired that people in Ephesus develop godliness by modeling Timothy. These words produced encouragement in Timothy himself, but they could also set in order some dissident, faultfinding elements of the congregations. After all, Paul was bestowing his full blessing on Timothy, and he wanted the Ephesians to learn from what the young disciple did.<sup>13</sup>

The elders of the congregations were commonly older men, often men of years. Timothy would also have to deal with all of them, and in case of a disagreement some of them might affect to despise Timothy because of his youth. It has been well said that in the case of a captain in the army forty is old, in the case of an Anglican bishop young, in the case of an English prime minister very young, in fact, too young. A college president, a synodical president, who is forty years old or less, would be very young and would invite the charge of immaturity even in America. Age does count in high positions. Paul did not think Timothy too young; he says so here and will let no one contradict this estimate of his representative.<sup>14</sup>

The conclusion has been drawn that Timothy was timid because of his years and that Paul is here offering an antidote for this timidity. But this may be an injustice to Timothy. Paul could not use a timid man as his representative in the Asian churches, nor could he hope to stiffen such a man’s courage at a distance by means of a single sentence. Paul’s remark is intended for any man who might try to oppose Timothy in his work and

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas D. Lea, and Hayne P. Griffin. *1, 2 Timothy, Titus*, vol. 34, The New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1937).

might thus pass a remark regarding Timothy's youth in order to influence the congregation; hence we have the wording: "let no one," etc.<sup>15</sup>

The use of γίvou in no way implies that Timothy has as yet not been an example for the believers and is now to become one; it signifies that he has been and is such an example and that he is to continue as such as a full and sufficient answer to any man who presumes to reflect on his youth. Paul does not fear indiscretion on Timothy's part; he is indicating the type of character and conduct that will hush every adverse remark about his youth.<sup>16</sup>

Paul uses neither four (minor rhetorical completeness) nor seven (sacred number) nor ten specifications (major completeness) but five (incompleteness) and thereby indicates that he is not exhausting the subject. This appears also in the listing: two pairs and one additional point as though Paul breaks off instead of completing the list.

"In word and in conduct" = outward demeanor in speech and in general action. Word includes teaching and all other forms of speaking. "In love and faith," love being apparent in word and in conduct, faith being the root of love. "In pureness" adds this one Christian virtue, to which others might be joined—not only sexual purity. In the LXX the word is used to indicate ritual purity; here and also in 5:2 moral cleanness and spotlessness is meant.<sup>17</sup>

Paul recognized the importance of equipping a successor to carry on the gospel message after his life and ministry were over. Specifically, Paul believed that his life was nearing its end, stating, "I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time

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<sup>15</sup> Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles*.

<sup>16</sup> Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles*.

<sup>17</sup> Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles*.

has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” To leave his earthly ministry without establishing a means for its continuation would contradict his overarching message to Timothy, which was to be strong in the preaching of the Word. He also encouraged Timothy to “discharge all the duties of your ministry,” thus reminding Timothy to develop his own successor in the future. In finding his own successor, Paul sought the right man for the job, relying on the Holy Spirit’s leading. According to Acts 16:1-3, Paul met Timothy while he was traveling through Lystra. Paul discovered that Timothy was the son of a believing Jewess and a Greek father and that people spoke highly of him. A good reputation was a characteristic that Paul valued immensely. In fact, after revealing Timothy’s excellent reputation, Acts 16:3 clearly states, “Paul wanted to take him along on the journey.” It was at this moment that the loving mentoring relationship between Paul and Timothy began.<sup>18</sup>

As soon as Paul and Timothy’s mentoring relationship commenced, Paul began equipping Timothy for the task of spreading God’s Word on earth. According to Acts 17:14, Paul’s strategy for equipping Timothy actually began with an early challenge. While Paul was preaching in Berea, some of the Jews came to agitate the crowds. Immediately, Paul separated himself from Timothy and their partner Silas after giving them instructions to meet him in Athens. In the meantime, Timothy and Silas were charged with the task of nurturing the young congregation that Paul had established in Berea. Though Paul recognized Timothy’s ministry potential, he saw just one area that

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<sup>18</sup> Stacy E. Hoehl, “The Mentor Relationship: An Exploration Of Paul As Loving Mentor To Timothy And The Application Of This Relationship To Contemporary Leadership Challenges,” *Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership*, accessed July 4, 2015 [http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol3no2/JBPL\\_Vol3No2\\_Hoehl\\_pp32-47.pdf](http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol3no2/JBPL_Vol3No2_Hoehl_pp32-47.pdf).

needed improvement. As mentioned previously, Timothy was the son of a Jewess and a Greek man, and because of this heritage, he remained uncircumcised. One commentary notes:

If the Jews at this time traced Jewish descent of mixed marriages matrilineally, uncircumcised Timothy is a Jew by birth but apostate. The small Jewish community at Lystra was either too weak or too lax to enforce circumcision in a culture that determined ethnic and religious heritage patrilineally. Still, Timothy has a good spiritual heritage from his mother (2 Tm 1:5; 3:15). With his father now possibly deceased (the verb tense seems to indicate this), there is no impediment to circumcision. And there is every reason. If Paul condones Timothy's uncircumcised, apostate status, he will not have access to synagogues, his strategic point of contact in most cities. Further, the decree's underlying principle of respect for cultural identity will be compromised by the presence of a Jewish Christian who has "gentilized." So by circumcising Timothy, Paul clarifies his status for Jewish believer and unbeliever alike.

Though Paul's actions in circumcising Timothy seemingly contradict his sentiment in Galatians 2:3-4 that circumcision has no value, Paul recognized the need for Timothy to relate to his ministerial audience.<sup>19</sup>

In 1 Corinthians 9:19, Paul addresses this need to relate to prospective converts by stating, "Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews." Based on this understanding of the necessity of relating to one's audience, Paul has Timothy circumcised so that he can identify with a greater portion of his audience. In preparing Timothy for ministry, Paul made sure that he was equipped for the task.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to carefully selecting Timothy and equipping him for ministry, Paul mentored Timothy through empowerment. By definition, empowerment is a cognitive state characterized by a sense of perceived control, competence, and goal internalization.

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<sup>19</sup> Hoehl, "The Mentor Relationship."

<sup>20</sup> Hoehl, "The Mentor Relationship."

Paul emphasized these components of empowerment by revealing that Timothy was called by God to be a minister, serving as an example of what it means to be one of God's workers, and reminding Timothy of his ministerial goals. According to Paul's dialogue with Timothy, Timothy was called by God to serve as a minister of the gospel message on earth. For example, in 1 Thessalonians 3:2, Paul describes Timothy as "our brother and God's fellow worker in spreading the gospel of Christ." Paul is also careful to mention Timothy's credentials as a servant of God in his letters to various congregations, as he does in Philippians 2:19-23. In these passages, Paul describes Timothy as a one-of-a-kind minister with a focus purely on Jesus Christ. Additionally, Paul states, "Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel."<sup>21</sup>

Through this process of demonstrating to Timothy that he was called to serve God in ministry, Paul was able to increase Timothy's level of psychological empowerment. In addition to revealing Timothy's call to ministry, Paul empowered Timothy by serving as an example of what it means to be a messenger of the gospel. For example, Acts 18:1-5 depicts a reunion between Paul, Timothy, and Silas after Paul had finished his independent travels to Corinth. Once these men were reunited, Acts 18:5 states, "Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ." By witnessing Paul's devotion to the preaching of the Word and his approach to sharing the gospel, Timothy would develop a greater understanding of the nature of ministry.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Hoehl, "The Mentor Relationship."

<sup>22</sup> Hoehl, "The Mentor Relationship."



Paul also empowered Timothy by directing his attention toward the goals of ministry. According to Timothy: Man of God, Paul focused on five main goals of ministry that were designed to motivate Timothy to endure any hardships he might encounter. These five concepts include eternal reward, past promises, present promises, future promises, and the sovereign God. First, at his ministry's end in 1 Timothy 6:12, Paul emphasized the eternal rewards that awaited Timothy reminding Timothy to "fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called." By persevering through the earthly challenges of ministry, Timothy would be rewarded with the blessings of eternal life.

Second, in terms of past promises, Paul's strategy was to remind Timothy of the commitment he made to Christ and to serving the gospel "when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses;" such a confession likely referred to Timothy's commissioning or ordination.

Third, in reminding Timothy of his present promises, Paul renews the charge that Timothy is to undertake in sharing the gospel message. According to "Timothy: Man of God," Paul's purpose in renewing this charge was so that "Timothy is reminded of his fellowship with Christ. He is our ever-present Lord (compare Mt 28:20). This comforting promise of continual fellowship, however, ought to compel us to the heights of faithfulness, for our Lord is also our judge (2 Tm 4:8; Rev 3:15-16)." Through a renewal of his present charge, Timothy would be motivated to "the heights of faithfulness."

Fourth, Paul reminded Timothy of the future promise of Christ's second coming in 1 Timothy 6:14. Paul knew that the promise of Christ's return was a motivator for the Christian living described in the remaining verses of the chapter. Paul also reminds

Timothy of the unique role he must carry out until the end, as he tells Timothy to “guard what has been entrusted to your care.”

Finally, Paul points Timothy to the ultimate reason for zealously preaching the gospel: the sovereign God, “the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.”<sup>23</sup>

In addition to referring to Timothy as his son, Paul also describes Timothy as his brother. Interestingly, these brotherly references occur after Timothy’s ministry has advanced and his faith and commitment have been tested through the trials of prison. In Philemon 1:1, Paul’s opening greeting reads, “Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,” which points to a coauthored letter. Hebrews 13:23 contains Paul’s announcement that Timothy has been released from prison, and refers to him once again as a brother. These examples demonstrate Paul’s respect for both Timothy’s ministry and his faithful perseverance through the trials that accompany being a committed servant of Christ.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, Paul is depicted as being thankful to have Timothy as a fellow minister of the gospel. An example of this appreciation occurs in 2 Timothy 1:3-4 which read, “I thank God, whom I serve, as my forefathers did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy.” This passage clearly demonstrates the extent to which a solid bond has developed between Paul and Timothy as they have served the Lord together. Paul’s loving mentor relationship with Timothy began with choosing Timothy as the right

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<sup>23</sup> Hoehl, “The Mentor Relationship.”

<sup>24</sup> Hoehl, “The Mentor Relationship.”

person to accompany him in serving the gospel. From that point forward, Paul mentored Timothy by equipping him for the tasks of ministry, empowering him for success, employing him for effectiveness at the church in Ephesus, and by communicating his love, respect, and appreciation for Timothy as a son, brother, and messenger of Christ.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Hoehl, "The Mentor Relationship."

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The Civil Rights Era between 1954 and 1968 was one of the greatest eras in American History. This era was a major social movement that had a direct interest in putting an end to racial inequality, especially laws of segregation, which particularly negatively affected Black people. This movement defined our nation in numerous ways. It brought out the very best in many people and leaders stepped up in ways that no one would ever expected. Many sacrificed their time, talents, resources, and energies to guarantee equality for all. Some gave up their personal safety so that others could enjoy the liberties and justices that being an American were supposed to ensure. Still, others surrendered their entire lives in the name of Civil Rights. Major activist were gunned down, hosed, burnt, chased and even assassinated all because they were chasing after complete freedom. Many lives were claimed; even the lives of very young children were taken, because while these Civil Rights Acts were bringing out the very best in some people, it was bringing out the absolute worst in others.

Racism was exemplified at an all-time high and it was uncovered in ways that Americans had not seen since slavery. Many people protested this new way of thinking that demanded and commanded equality for Black people. Equality was, to say the least, undesired by most white people and they would go through great lengths to see that every plan to gain equality would fail. Whites were strategic in their efforts to hold African

American people back and to treat them less than United States Citizens, even though the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment had already granted African Americans citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

Without the acts that happened during the Civil Rights Era, many of the liberties that are taken for granted today would not exist. Jim Crow's Separate but Equal laws still could be prevailing today. These laws made it legal for African Americans to be treated as second-class citizens. They could ride on the buses with whites, but they had to ride on the back, and if a white person got on, African Americans were forced to give up their seats, despite the fact that they were occupying the seat first. These same laws that allowed African Americans to buy food from white lunch counters, but were forced to be served in the backs of restaurants. The Jim Crow law was just legal slavery and a way to keep reinforcing to every American citizen that White was better and Black was inferior.<sup>2</sup>

It is imperative that one realizes that many of the demonstrations that were completed throughout the Civil Rights Movement was pioneered and carried out by young people. So many people were willing to give up their young-adulthood, a time that was supposed to be fun and joyous, in order to dedicate themselves to Civil Rights. Though ages are not often mentioned, it is vital that one understands the importance of what young people under the age of forty did for the entire Civil Rights Movement. Many college students were heavily involved in protests, marches, and sit-ins that would later be extremely valuable in the progression of equality for Black people all across the South. Many leaders, including The Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King, Jr., were young and could have very easily decided that their lives and their families were more

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<sup>1</sup> Raymond Arsenault, *Freedom Riders 1961 and the Struggle for Racial Justice* (Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders 1961*.

valuable than trying to get laws changed in a country that was so obviously filled with hatred and its value system was so demoralized that color mattered more than character. But, these fierce leaders decided that their lives were worth the sacrifice, if it meant that the prospect of change was even remotely in sight.<sup>3</sup>

While older people provided moral support, guidance, and wisdom, it must be understood that young people proved to be the legs of the Civil Rights Era. It is true that without the teachings of older men and women, many great ideas for the progression of the movement would have never been introduced. However, it was the strength, courage, and fortitude of young people that enabled different acts in the movement to be completely carried out. Even while the older civil rights activists provided funding and mentorship to the younger activists, their physical capabilities were sometimes limited. So, young people courageously stepped in and volunteered for the beatings, hosing, and jailing that some of the older people's bodies just did not allow them to endure. The older and younger people worked together hand and hand, while each age group understood their roles and for the most part carried their roles out with great pride. This is not to suggest that many times older people did not march and participate in demonstrations that caused them to endure terrible acts of racism, this only suggests that it was highly likely that most young people who were participants of the movement played a major role in being the activists that kept the movement at the forefront of the country's public issues.

The Civil Rights Movement was not just a single act; it was a movement that encompassed several different efforts that all had the same purpose in mind. One of the efforts that were incredibly influential was the Freedom Rides of 1961. This was a demonstration of courage and bravery from a group of people who were tireless in their

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<sup>3</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* 1961.

endeavors to see that segregation on buses would be brought to an end. In the *Irene Morgan versus the Commonwealth of Virginia* cases, it was ruled that segregation of buses was unconstitutional. Instead of southern states following the laws and desegregating the buses, the law was out rightly ignored. The Freedom Rides would challenge the non-enforcement of the laws and demand that actions be taken. The first Freedom Riders, seven Blacks and six whites, devised a plan to ride interstate travel, engaging in civil disobedience. One inter-racial pair would sit in adjoining seats, one Black would sit in the front of the bus, others would scatter throughout the bus, and one of the riders would follow the segregation rules of the South to avoid the possibility of being arrested so that they could make arrangements and post bail for other riders who were arrested.<sup>4</sup>

The Freedom Riders knew they could expect some danger and they were even prepared for many arrest, as the bus did leave from Washington D.C. and travel through Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and end in New Orleans. But the sheer outrage and brutality that met them could have never been foreseen. The reactions from many of the states and state officials and leaders were indescribable. The tires of buses were slashed, the riders were beat until they were nearly unconscious, and they were hosed and even gunned down. But, the worst happened to these first riders in Anniston, Alabama. The Rev Dr Martin Luther King had been given special insight that warned the riders, “you will never make it through Anniston. He had learned of a

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<sup>4</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* 1961.

conspiracy by the Klu Klux Klan, the police, and local officials to stop them with brute force.”<sup>5</sup>

These groups of people together met the riders and bombed the bus they were traveling on. With the purpose of killing them, they held the doors shut to negate any chances of the riders escaping from the bus. Because of a sheer act of God that documenters cannot explain, even today, the riders were able to escape. Though they did escape the fiery death of the bombs, they did not escape from the severe attacks of the mobsters and the Klu Klux Klan once they got off the bus. There were police on the scene, but the police did absolutely nothing to interfere with the riot that was taking place. In fact, some of the police aided Klansmen and mobsters in the beating of the riders. Among those beating the riders were FBI investigators and over 3,000 whites.<sup>6</sup>

The riders were beaten so bad that several of them were nearly dead, and one rider in particular, James Peck, required more than fifty stitches to the head for his wounds. James Peck was one of the white riders and he was refused treatment at the Carraway Methodist Medical Center but later received treatment from the Jefferson Hillman Hospital. It was clear that the white riders were singled out for especially brutal beatings because white protestors of the Civil Rights Movement were particularly angry at whites that had decided to help African Americans in the cause. All of the Freedom Riders needed to seek major medical attention. But, as bad as they were beaten and as much as they needed medical attention, many of them were refused medical care from local hospitals and had to rely on themselves, and a selected few hospitals that would treat them, in order to get the necessary medical treatment.

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<sup>5</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* 1961.

<sup>6</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* 1961.



On May 21, 1961, one day after this terrible riot had broken out on a Sunday night, Rev Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., (who was just getting based in Montgomery) Reverend Fred Shuttlesworth, and James Farmer spoke at major political meeting and church service at the First Baptist Church, where the pastor was Ralph Abernathy, and more than 1,500 people attended. King went outside where mobsters were and calmed down many Black activists that had made up in their minds to fight back by any means necessary. King's actions were considered to be heroic as he made it back inside unharmed. He then encouraged gatherers to take the non-violent approach and fight with their mind, not their fist.<sup>7</sup>

At this point, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) formed the Freedom Riders. But, after things had gotten so bad for the riders and many of them remained jailed and some hospitalized, new riders had to come forward. "Time and time again, the Riders seemed on the verge of defeat, but in every instance they found a way to sustain and expand their challenge to Jim Crow segregation."<sup>8</sup> The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) together worked with CORE to swiftly put together new groups of Freedom Riders. "Suddenly, the issue was not reinforcing the riders but replacing them, not boosting the rides' success but preventing its failure."<sup>9</sup> Hundreds of students from different cities all over the country, some in particular: Nashville, Washington, and the Carolinas volunteered to join in the upward hill struggle to defeat the bitter segregation

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<sup>7</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* 1961.

<sup>8</sup> Arsenault, *Freedom Riders* 1961.

<sup>9</sup> Taylor Branch, *The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, NY: Simon & Shuster, 2013).

laws of the south. The students had unwavering faith that they could make a difference and their courageous acts could stand the test of time. Giving up and giving in was not an option. Even when the Kennedy administration begged and pleaded for a cool down period and asked that riders hold off on riding because of the widespread hatred that were nearly costing people their lives and was a great embarrassment to our country, as the news of the riots that broke out from The Rides, began to spread across the entire world. Before long, many southern jails were filled with African American students all singing freedom songs and on one accord to achieve the goal that they had set out to. By the end of the rides, though many had been beaten horrendously, over three hundred students had joined together, arm in arm, and rode buses participating in civil disobedience in order to call for true change in our country's laws.

Though over half of the country agreed that the Jim Crow laws were ridiculous and should be changed, not many people agreed on how they should be changed. Even Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King struggled with how to carry out the Rides. There was tremendous fear about putting so many young people in such great danger. King decided that he was not even going to take part in riding on the buses partly because it was so incredibly dangerous, but he was very publically supportive of the Rides. Racial segregation on buses had to come to an end and most people genuinely agreed with this argument. "...But only twenty-four percent approved of what the 'freedom riders' are doing. When asked if sit-ins, Freedom Rides and "other demonstrations by Negroes" would hurt or help the Negro's chances of being integrated in the South," only 27 % of

the respondent thought they would help.”<sup>10</sup> These were not large percentages, especially considering that so many people were willing to give up so much for this cause.

However, all the hard work eventually paid off. It took much persistence and a faith that was without waiver in order to see these rides to the end.

The Freedom Riders never did actually make it to New Orleans, where the trip was originally supposed to end. Many of their riders spent their summer in jail. A lot of the riders were permanently damaged, physically and emotionally from the terrible beatings inflicted upon them. But their efforts were hardly in vain. Their major acts forced the Kennedy administration to take a stand on civil rights, which was the primary intent of the Freedom Rides in the first place. In addition to this, the Interstate Commerce Commission, because of a request made by Robert Kennedy, outlawed segregation in interstate bus travel in a ruling, more specific than the original Supreme Court mandate that took effect in September of 1961. The response was exactly what African American people and many of the whites that had so bravely stepped in to help wanted. The Freedom Riders may not have finished the trip like they had originally planned, but they made an important and lasting contribution to the civil rights movement. These acts are acts that will and can never be forgotten. They have been written in the pages of our history books and were extremely influential in making changes that were beneficial in making this country what we can now call Land of the Free.

Another influential act of the Civil Rights Movements was that of the Sit-ins, where again, college students and young people were at the forefront in the call for change. One of the very first documented sit-ins that were pioneering in the Civil Rights

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<sup>10</sup> Taylor Branch, *The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement* (New York, NY: Simon & Shuster, 2013).

Movement took place in Greensboro, North Carolina on February 1, 1960. On this day, four college friends, who were freshmen sat down at the F. W. Woolworth's lunch counter. Joseph McNeil, Ezell Blair, Jr., David Richmond, and Franklin McCain, ordered as they wished, but instead of being served, the waitress expressed her apologies and told them that they could not be served there. The students decided that this was unacceptable. They responded back by making the waitress understand their dissatisfaction in what she was telling them. "They argued that they should be served, that the other counters in the store had been happy to take their money, they showed receipts to prove it."<sup>11</sup> This was done spontaneously. No "real plan" had been formulated. This was just a group of friends choosing not to be treated unjustly. These guys had sat for hours upon hours in each other's dorm rooms and spoken to each other about what should and could be done to put an end to America, as they had known it. They had talked over and over again about how much better things should be and how they did not know what or where exactly to start but they knew the must do something. These four guys, though exceptionally bright, did not know how to take action on a matter so seriously that it could literally cost them their lives. Still they were under the notion that "something has to give." One of the guys remember his thoughts by saying, "The Negro himself was mentally set to do something about segregation, and such incidents as Montgomery and Little Rock had helped paved the way."<sup>12</sup> These four guys had talked about finding a way to change the world. "...They began wondering if they were not like so many other people who as McCain recalled, "talked a lot about problems, made a lot of noise, but never did anything. So, we wondered about this thing. Who's worse off—the people who are not aware enough to do

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<sup>11</sup> Steven Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> Miles Wolfe, *Lunch at the 5 & 10* (Chicago, IL: Miles Wolfe, 1990).

anything about problems, or people who are aware enough but never take any action? We really did not want to put ourselves in the same category as those who talked but never act, so we said, “let’s do something.”<sup>13</sup> So, the sit-ins, though it was not well planned, at first, was the idea. This idea was what sparked a national wildfire.

Upon entering and sitting down at the counter, the manager of the store tried to persuade them to move along. A police that was coincidentally there paced back and forth as he slapped his Billy club with his hand. But, the students very politely refused to move without first being served and neither the police nor the manager took any specific action. It was closing time when these four college students got up and departed. They had sat there at that counter all day, refusing to budge until they were served. But, the end of the day did not end the movement. Other students heard what these four students had done and decided that this was only the beginning.

Sitting there that day was making a statement. But, new students were now setting out to make a change and without fail, they woke up the next morning, backed by excited school leaders and students, and went back to Woolworth’s lunch counter. This time, it was more organized than before and thirty students went with them to that same counter. Every day, thereafter, there were follow-up sit-ins and by the end of two weeks, many Blacks and some whites had joined together in these efforts. There were so many that it could now be considered a true disturbance. The mayor had even requested letters in writing that would negotiate students’ demands. These movements had spread throughout North Carolina and eight communities had formed sit-ins, all filled with young people that were significant in changing these horrible laws. At February’s end, the demonstrations had spread to thirty-one communities in seven different southern

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<sup>13</sup> Miles. *Lunch at the 5 & 10*.

states. By springtime, there were between 50,000 and 70,000 student participants in sit-ins. This could do nothing but create national attention. The movement was serious and it kicked the start of America going through a series of very necessary events to see the necessary changes so that it could become the place that it has manifested into today.

The sit-ins did not remain as peaceful as they had started and many whites were becoming increasingly frustrated with the audacities of these Black students. “How dare these Negroes demand to be served at our counters,” was the thoughts of many white Americans. The spontaneous civil disobedience turned into sheer, blunt brutality. White students and some officials began violently attacking these students in different cities while they were in at these counters. But, Blacks had been taught about non-violent approaches and were instructed a great deal on how to get the job done, without being violent towards their attackers, even when attackers were cruel to them. Students attended workshops where non-violent strategies were taught. “Student leader John Lewis stayed up all night to write and mimeograph a last-minute list of basic instructions. “Do show yourself friendly on the counter at all times. Do sit straight and always face the counter. Do not strike back, or curse if attacked. Do not laugh out. Do not hold conversations. Do not block entrances. The list ended: Remember the teachings of Jesus, Gandhi, Thoreau, and Martin Luther King, Jr.”<sup>14</sup> The students were instructed to pay extra close attention to these rules and they made sure to follow them carefully. It was not always easy to follow the rules, but the students and other young participants made sure to keep a greater goal in mind. In fact, each day the situations grew worse. Many have testified that they had to be in the “right state of mind” in order to face the mounting challenges of the haters of the sit-ins. More have stated that the support from their colleagues gave them strength

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<sup>14</sup> Kasher, *The Civil Rights Movement*.

that could not always be found within. The uniting of the so many students assisted in fostering an atmosphere that was conducive to real change and this ignited positive feedback from many people in authority.

Before any noticeable change was made, things got worse, just as it had during the boycotts. Though the numbers of sit-in participants had grown largely, the numbers of people who were against the sit-ins were growing drastically as well. People were growing angry and tempers were flying. Some white people were outraged and they were going to make certain that this change that was being called for and that was well over due was not going to happen easily. "White boys paraded with Confederate flags, some with miniature flags stuck in cigarettes, while Negroes carried miniature American flags. A Negro parading in the aisle with an American flag was jeered by the crowd. A firecracker was thrown, but no one was hurt."<sup>15</sup> These few acts were acts that were calm in comparison to what would happen in days to come. White people wanted to be sure that the statements that they were making were to be taken exceptionally serious. It was their tactic that if they could get enough of their followers to outnumber the Negroes, the Negroes would be fearful and stop all the protesting. However, they could not be more wrong. The more the white mobs showed up angry and hostile, the more Negroes showed up, thinking clearly and mission-minded. They were not going anywhere until the end of the ridiculous, out-right racism ceased. New groups of students came. Even a whole football team from North Carolina Agriculture and Mechanical College joined in the protest. They came in and sat quietly, but because most of them were extremely big and tall, they brought a different presence with them and for they invoked fear in the people who were against them, even without ever mumbling a single word. They were

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<sup>15</sup> Miles, *Lunch at the 5 & 10*.

distinguished and quiet and this was a powerful statement. It was not just the female students who wanted to see change and willing to work hard for it. The college men, even those who had only been previously noticed for their athletic abilities, were now joining forces with intellectuals and protesters who all had one common goal. The wave of strength, courage, and wisdom that swept throughout the country with unified participants was nothing short of glorious. It is outrageously apparent that without so many people, both Black and white, coming together and working together, creating mass unity, that many of these dreams and goals would not have become reality. No one person that was more important than another. Each person that demonstrated at the counters, a very imperative role was played in seeing these demonstrations through to completion.

Though these demonstrations started off very unplanned and it was unsure what exactly would be the result of the sit-ins, they proved to be one of best demonstrations in the Civil Rights Acts. National attention was spread about the sit-ins via the newspapers and every city, state and government official was consumed with the idea of what was next to come after the sit-ins were over. It took months but at the end many progressions had taken place. White counters were serving blacks in places that they had never served Blacks before.

The fact that young people largely headed these demonstrations is something that the current generation should look at and this should not be taken light. These young people were innovative and energetic. Sometimes they had major vision and carried out plans very directly. But, there were other times when there was not a lot of vision or even



know how. Instead, it was a burning passion to make a difference and to be effective in bringing change to people across the United States of America.

Looking at these situations and how they were spearheaded by young people helps us to understand that young people have a major voice to help spawn change. The younger generations of today can be just as effective as they were back then. Everyone has to be willing to do their part and to the best of their abilities. If everyone makes commitments to play their roles this generation can stand on the shoulders of the last to help make this world a much better place.

Following the examples of times past can help us reach future goals. There are changes that still need to be made today. Sit-ins and freedom rides helped spark change in the 60's and 70's but there are things that we can do today that can take our churches, country and even African Americans to better places than we have ever been before.

The church in the 60's and 70's went out to the community. Many church leaders, pastors, and clergy persons were at the forefront of these movements. Meetings were held at various churches and it seems that clergypersons worked together in order to get a job done. They had goals in mind and they were committed to achieving these goals, so they did not stop until they were completed. Even with personal differences and at times various methodologies, these people kept the common goal in mind, which was to make life better for African American people. By doing this, they were able to get a job done that was greater than one person and could not be done without the help of many people.

People like Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. did not miraculously change the times alone. He gathered together people that wanted change as badly as he did. He had the will power and the youthfulness to march and sit and go against odds that an older

person many not have been able to. He was able to get people to buy into his vision, forming support both physically and financially. It was not that everyone agreed with everything he said or did, nor did he agree with everyone else's ideas. However, many differences were put aside for the good of the whole. If leaders today could get back to this, the country and even the world could be in a much better place. If our selfish motives were thrown out and replaced with genuine care for the betterment of all, radical changes can be made.

The changes that were made were not changes that can happen without a lot of careful planning and some spontaneous will power. But, it is an absolute must that there is a sense of unity and readiness. Young people today must not forfeit hard work for charisma alone. Hard work, willpower, fortitude, and strength must be carried within, in order for the change that is being sought to be made manifested. Young men and women must take those same attitudes that the young men and women did in the 1960's and 1970's. That was an attitude that could not be beaten. The attitudes of these people could not be shaken, neither could they be persuaded. They were purpose driven and were not willing to take no for an answer.

Young men and women today have the power to invoke change and empower the people to seek necessary change for today's world. Though this country has come very far, we still have a long way to go. It is desired to see someone from this generation pick up where Dr. King left off by bringing God and the church to this world. This world today needs as much revolution, though in different ways, as it did when Dr. King was alive. It is apparent that our nation has become desensitized to many issues because of the major progress that has been made. Though our country has voted in an African

American president twice, the numbers of violent shootings targeted at young African American men has increased a great deal.

Polices are killing young African American men or they are being gunned-down for no reason at all by whites who have “stand your ground” laws to stand behind. The world goes in an uproar for three months while the trials are going on. People come out, march, and protest against the laws. But, when the cases are over, we leave families with the loss of their children and we go on with our lives, until the next murder happens and then we do it all over again. But, it is my observation that more can be done. Many more rallies should be held. We should be meeting on a continuum to discuss plans and projects that will keep these issues at the forefront, just like they did during the sit-ins and boycotts. Our complacency has made us stagnant and caused us not to work as hard as we can, even in areas that need to be addressed immediately. There can be more done. Young men and women are more intelligent than they have ever been and resources are more readily available than they been in times past. But, we need more workers, with the same mind frame. There is enough money, intelligence, and power to literally turn this world right side up if all these were used correctly.

It is difficult to suggest, but if more people were like Dr. King and willing to lie down their lives for the cause, our world could be better. If we can ever get the young people to understand the seriousness of unity and take into consideration that many have fought and died for basic rights like voting and eating wherever you want, we would be in a much better position. When this is understood, there will be no need rallies that have to make people get out and vote. It will be viewed as privilege and honor and our voices can be heard. When the fact that people died for our basic rights resonates within the

cisterns of hearts, we will gladly get together to build each other up, instead of pulling each other down. When young people truly comprehend that there was a time that they were forced to sit and eat where they were told, instead of where they wanted, they will take pride in sparking change and will no longer accept the murders of innocent young people and just tragedy, instead they will see it as a catalyst for movements and changes. Our young men and women can be the change that we need to see in this world, with the help, guidance, and assistance from the generation that came before them.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS**

The great proliferation of ideas and methodologies that explore organizations and leadership over the past fifty years reveals that there are a wide variety of theoretical approaches that explain the leadership phenomenon. Collectively, the research findings provide a picture of a process that is sophisticated and complex, as well as theories that inform the practice of leadership. As the empirical bases, theoretical development, and methodological foundation of the field of leadership continue to evolve, it is evident by omission that theological considerations of leadership are not penetrating the literature of leadership, nor keeping pace in terms of advancement. One reason may be understood at a foundational level. While theology attempts to explain God, leadership is essentially man-centered as it is anthropological and sociological in nature. Investigating in greater detail, the definitions of theology and leadership aids in understanding this divergence; it also builds a basis for the interrelation between the two.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Michale Ayers "Toward A Theology of Leadership," Journal of Biblical Perspectives in Leadership, accessed June 23, 2015, [http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol1no1/Ayers\\_JBPL\\_V1No1.pdf](http://www.regent.edu/acad/global/publications/jbpl/vol1no1/Ayers_JBPL_V1No1.pdf).

## **Theology Defined**

Garrett states that theology is “the ordered consideration or study of God.”

As is common in other fields of study, the long history of theological studies is as varied as the authors who pursue such studies and reflects multidimensional strains of analysis and reporting. For instance, some theologians approach theology from a pure historical perspective by simply examining diverse theologians in history and their theologies. Others speak of theology in a philosophical way, dealing almost exclusively with philosophical, linguistic, or sociological matters as a way of explaining God. Karleen asserts that this view of theology attempts to organize data from all sources concerning God and his activities (e.g., history, philosophy, logic, law, and other fields) and often seeks to explain God without significant reference to the Bible. Alternatively, Hodge discusses that there are theologians that approach theology as a science. He claims that a scientific approach in any field of study should move beyond the tactile recordation of data to the systematic organization of that data so that meaning may be assigned. The science of theology must therefore include something more than a mere knowledge of facts. It must embrace an exhibition of the internal relation of those facts, one to another, and each to all.<sup>2</sup>

The comments by Hodge lay the foundation for understanding the evolution of a common approach in biblical theology that pursues the systemization of biblical matter into a coherent a posteriori schema. This approach has become known as “systematic theology.” Discussing the nature of systematic theology, Hodge states that the Bible is no more a system of theology than nature is a system of chemistry or mechanics. We find in

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<sup>2</sup> Ayers, “Toward A Theology of Leadership.”

nature the facts that the chemist or mechanical philosopher has to examine and from them ascertain the laws by which they are determined. Likewise, the Bible contains the truths that the theologian has to collect, authenticate, arrange, and exhibit in their internal relation to each other. Hodge states, “This (process) constitutes the difference between biblical and systematic theology. The onus of the former is to ascertain and state the facts of Scripture. The office of the latter is to take those facts, determine their relation to each other and to other cognate truths, vindicate them, and show their harmony and consistency.”<sup>3</sup>

From systematic approaches to biblical theology have arisen such categories as Calvinistic theology, Reformed theology, Armenian theology, Covenant theology, Dispensational theology, and others. All reflect assumptions and paradigms that drive the discussion and practice of systematic theology, as well as nuances of differentiation within each paradigm.<sup>4</sup>

### **Christian (Church) Leadership Defined**

Christian leadership is the process of helping a group embody in its corporate life the practices that shape vital Christian life, community, and witness in ways that are faithful to Jesus Christ and the gospel and appropriate to the particular group’s setting, resources, and purpose. The above definition does not limit the function of leadership to particular individuals or offices. The New Testament teaches and the church affirms that “the task of ministry is shared by all and is not limited to a special, professional class. . . . The ministry of the church is Christ’s ministry, shared by all who are in Christ.” It is also

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<sup>3</sup> Ayers, “Toward A Theology of Leadership.”

<sup>4</sup> Ayers, “Toward A Theology of Leadership.”

important to clarify that the definition above address the essence of leadership, not the various styles in which leadership is expressed. In essence, Christian leadership is the same in all times and places. It embodies unchanging principles and values, such as servanthood, morality, respect for all people as divine image bearers, and so on. But the style of leadership varies greatly depending upon the individual leader and the situation in which leadership is exercised. A well-developed and mature leader has the capacity to exercise different styles in different situations. A crisis situation may call for an authoritarian style, a decision-making process among peers may call for a consensus-building style, and a learning situation may call for a prophetic style. Leadership styles are neither linear nor hierarchical; they are best understood as options in a repertoire circle where the situation determines which style will best serve.<sup>5</sup>

Culture of leadership refers to the common ideas, feelings, and values that guide community and personal behavior, that organize and regulate what a particular group thinks, feels, and does about God, the world, and humanity. Culture is that invisible vault where worldviews, presuppositions, and values are generated and stored. Effective leaders understand that culture operates most powerfully when it is least visible. Consider these two images: First, culture is like the ocean. The power of the ocean is not in the six-foot waves on top of the water; it is in the massive movement of water underneath the wave, a movement that cannot be seen. Second, as one wag has put it, “Culture is like bad breath: you smell it on everyone else before you smell it on yourself.” That is, just

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<sup>5</sup> “Effective Leadership In the Church,” accessed June 23, 2015, [http://www2.crcna.org/site\\_uploads/uploads/spe/spe\\_effective\\_leadership.pdf](http://www2.crcna.org/site_uploads/uploads/spe/spe_effective_leadership.pdf).



like people do not smell their own breath, they often do not see their own cultural values at work. Culture operates most powerfully when it is least visible.<sup>6</sup>

According to law professor Stephen Carter, "Integrity...is a kind of wholeness, and most religions teach that God calls us to an undivided life in accordance with divine command." If we are to possess integrity as congregational leaders—construing integrity as wholeness, congruence of act and faith, humility, purity of heart, and correspondence between our "private" and "public" selves—then we must engage in on-going theological reflection. A robust Christian doctrine of sin not only doubts the wisdom of entrusting a group's fate to the unchecked will of a single leader, it also calls into question the wisdom of seeking wisdom in the mind of any lone individual. If our leadership is an expression of faith in the perceptions and hopes of others, if, indeed, our leadership is ultimately an expression of faith in the God whose knowledge and wisdom are beyond all human understanding, then our leadership is also an expression of trust in the collective wisdom of the congregation and considerable distrust of our own partial and flawed perceptions.<sup>7</sup>

If we are to possess integrity as congregational leaders—construing integrity as wholeness, congruence of act and faith, humility, purity of heart, and correspondence between our "private" and "public" selves—then we must engage in on-going theological reflection, and this theological reflection must occur at ground level, not somewhere in the stratosphere of abstraction. In other words, our theological reflection must

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<sup>6</sup> "Effective Leadership In the Church."

<sup>7</sup> Michael Jenkins, "The Integrity of Ministry, Communicative Theology and the Leadership of Congregations," *Journal of Religious Leadership*, 8 no. 1 Spr. 2009: 1-25, accessed June 23, 2015, ATLA Religion Database with ATLASerials, Ebscohost.

qualitatively reflect the reality of the lives we live and must not shrink from engaging consciously and as faithfully as possible the tectonic stress points that test our integrity. An approach to theological reflection particularly well suited to congregational leadership is what Rowan Williams has described as "communicative theology." According to Williams, this approach to theological reflection bears "witness to the gospel's capacity for being at home in more than one cultural environment," revealing the "confidence to believe that this gospel can be rediscovered at the end of a long and exotic detour through strange idioms and structures of thought." Williams calls this type of theology "communicative" because it is "a theology experimenting with the rhetoric of its uncommitted environment."<sup>8</sup>

When we as Christians engage in theological reflection across such boundaries, we reflect an awareness that we live as human beings in what Paul Tillich described as a "boundary" or "border situation," that is, existing as creatures and social beings, but also, as creatures and social beings transcending human existence, aware also that the church "stands at this border line" at "any and every place." The approach to theological reflection designated by Williams as communicative is particularly fruitful given the fact that our identity as Christians is formed amid the complex interactions of human social and cultural engagement, in relationships across all sorts of boundaries. As Kathryn Tanner observes in her study, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology*, "different ways of life take over quite a bit of cultural material from one another." Thus "[a] Christian way of life is...essentially parasitic; it has to establish relations with other

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<sup>8</sup> Jenkins, "The Integrity of Ministry."

ways of life, it has to take from them, in order to be one itself....Christian practices are always the practices of others made odd."<sup>9</sup>

To say much the same thing, though perhaps more constructively, a communicative approach to theology looks to sources of wisdom beyond any single creedal community, even beyond all creeds, to a variety of persons and communities of discourse and values, to a multitude of disciplines and disciplinary perspectives, seeking to complement our partial knowledge as Christians and Christian theologians in the confidence that God is active in all of creation. To understand better how one might engage in a "communicative" approach to theological reflection on the Christian practice of congregational leadership and to discern the benefits of this kind of theological reflection, we need to actually engage in it.<sup>10</sup>

### **Young Adults and Leadership**

Allen J. Moore is a professor in the School of Theology at Claremont and a member of the faculty of the Claremont Graduate School. He begins his book on the young adult generation by challenging "the popular notion that there is a massive generation gap in our society." He rejects the myth that these new young adults are of some special breed, but he believes that their behavior reflects deep and far-reaching changes that have been taking place in society. The present young adult generation is rebelling against the basic structures of society and not just against parents and authority figures. Moore suggests that by studying young adults we can understand better the times

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<sup>9</sup> Jenkins, "The Integrity of Ministry."

<sup>10</sup> Jenkins, "The Integrity of Ministry."

in which we live and can get a preview of the potentialities and pitfalls in the new era of radical humanism just ahead. Moore believes we are living through a time of massive cultural transition rightly described by Bonhoeffer as the “world coming of age,” marked by the growing confidence in man's ability to handle his own problems without the aid of religion. Modern man assumes that any problem can be solved; any goal can be reached if enough money and qualified scientists are invested in the effort.<sup>11</sup>

Moore concludes that there is indeed a generation gap separating the old age and the new, but that this gap is a reality enhanced, not entirely by age differences, but by the larger issue of what it means to be a man in the new age." Moore identifies as some of the more important issues separating the generations: 1) the breakdown of communication between the generations; 2) lack of historical point of view and preoccupation with the now on the part of young adults; and 3) the older generation is more concerned with private morality. The younger generation demands social moral responsibility in such areas as race, war, poverty, etc. Respect today is not based upon age, but on the quality of one's life and one's demonstrated competence. Moore recognizes and rejoices in the prophetic note evidenced in the new generation of young adults. Change must be welcomed rather than resisted. "The gospel calls us to leave the past behind and to move with hope and confidence into the future. To be a Christian is to believe in change and the promises that it brings." Moore sees God as Creator and Actor within history. Creation is a continuous process and God is ever acting in the events of change.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Allen W. Graves, “The Young Adult Generation,” *Review & Expositor*, 67 no. 1 Winter 1970: 110, accessed June 25, 2015, ATLASerials, Religion Collection, Ebscohost.

<sup>12</sup> Graves, “The Young Adult Generation.”

## Styles of Church Leadership

*The Visionary Leader.* These leaders have a crystal-clear picture in their minds of what they want to happen. They cast visions powerfully and possess indefatigable enthusiasm to pursue the mission. Visionaries shamelessly appeal to anyone and everyone to get on board with the vision. They talk about it, write about it, burn white-hot for it. They are future-oriented, usually idealistic, and full of faith to believe the vision can and will be actualized if the dream is talked about and cast often enough. Visionary leaders are not easily discouraged or deterred. In fact, if people tell them their dream is impossible, that just adds fuel to the fire in their spirit. Visionary leaders may or may not be able to form teams, align talents, set goals, or manage progress toward the achievement of the vision. But this one thing is sure: They carry the vision. They cast the vision. They draw people into the vision, and they'll die trying to see it fulfilled. You know a person is a visionary leader when he trips on the stage and no one even acknowledges it! It was a picture of the leader who cannot help but pour out the vision, despite any obstacle.<sup>13</sup>

*Directional Leaders.* This style does not get much press, but it is exceedingly important. The directional leader has the uncanny, God-given ability to choose the right path at those critical intersections where an organization starts asking hard questions: "Is it time for a wholesale change or should we stay the course? Do we focus on growth or consolidation? Should we start new ministries or deepen and improve existing ones? Should we add facilities or relocate? Is it time for some fresh staff, or do we dance with those who brought us here?" These are directional issues, and they are capable of

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<sup>13</sup> Building Church Leaders, "Determining Your Leadership Style," accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.buildingchurchleaders.com/articles/1998/le-811-811084.html?start=1>.

immobilizing an organization. But a leader with a directional style is able to sort the options. He or she can carefully assess the values, mission, strengths, weaknesses, resources, personnel, and openness to change of an organization—then, with remarkable wisdom, point that organization in the right direction.<sup>14</sup>

Some leaders have the God-given ability to break an exciting vision into achievable steps, so an organization can march intentionally toward the actualization of their mission. Visions are powerful. Visions excite and inspire people. They compel action. But unless people eventually see progress toward the fulfillment of the vision, they conclude the vision caster is just blowing smoke. A strategic leader forms a game plan everyone can understand and participate in, one that will eventually lead to the achievement of the vision. A strategic leader challenges the organization to work the plan. She says, "Don't get distracted. Do what needs to be done to achieve the next step, then the next, and we'll achieve the vision together." A strategic leader is able to get various departments of an organization synchronized so that the organization is focused toward the prize.<sup>15</sup>

*Managing Leader.* There is always discussion in leadership circles about the differences between management and leadership. You have heard, "Managers do things right; leaders do the right things," and other delineations. Those may be helpful, but certain leaders possess the unique ability to establish mile markers on the road to the destination, then organize and monitor people, processes, systems, and resources for mission achievement. Old Testament examples include Joseph and Nehemiah. What is most amazing to those who do not have this style is that managing leaders derive

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<sup>14</sup> Building Church Leaders, "Determining Your Leadership Style."

<sup>15</sup> Building Church Leaders, "Determining Your Leadership Style."

enormous satisfaction from doing all this managing! You would be surprised how many visionary leaders are inept at managing people, processes, and systems. Many directional and strategic leaders are incapable of actually putting the players, resources, and systems in place for the goals of the organization to be achieved. Managing leaders often are not as popular as the leader who can give the big vision talk, make the big decision around the boardroom table, or put the big plan in place. But in the day-to-day world, someone has to manage the process to make sure we get where we want to go.<sup>16</sup>

*Motivational Leader.* These leaders possess insight into who needs a fresh challenge or additional training. They can sense who needs public recognition, an encouraging word, or a day off. They know when a pay increase, office change, title change, or sabbatical is needed. Unfortunately, some view the motivational style as a lightweight style of leadership. Motivational leaders know that teammates get tired, lose focus, and experience mission drift. Workers wonder if what they are doing really matters to anyone—or to God. Motivational leaders don not get bitter or vengeful when morale sinks. They see it as an opportunity to inspire and lift the spirits of everyone on the team.<sup>17</sup>

*Shepherding Leader.* This man or woman loves team members so deeply, nurtures them so gently, supports them so consistently, listens to them so patiently, and prays for them so diligently that the mission of the team gets achieved. It happens primarily because of good will in the hearts of those who have been cared for by the shepherd. It is a different dynamic with shepherding leaders and their teams. Team members support their *shepherd*, and teammates often feel, whatever cause is important to the leader is fine

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<sup>16</sup> Building Church Leaders, “Determining Your Leadership Style.”

<sup>17</sup> Building Church Leaders, “Determining Your Leadership Style.”

with me. If it is broadly Christian, if we can accomplish it in community, if we can retain our shepherd, we will do it. While there are many cause-driven people waiting to be drawn into a mission by a visionary leader, there are surprising numbers of community-driven people who want to be shepherded and loved. When they are, they will joyfully pursue almost any kingdom purpose. If you can shepherd a group of people, you are a leader, and you can really make a difference.<sup>18</sup>

*Team-building Leaders.* These leaders have supernatural insight into people. They find or develop leaders with the right abilities, character, and chemistry with other team members. They place people in the right positions for the right reasons that will then produce the right results. The team-building leader might not nurture or manage people well. He or she reasons that should not be necessary. If the right people are in the right slots doing the right things for the right reasons, they will get the work done without the leader looking over their shoulder. Few things are as exciting to me as drawing together the right people, putting them in the right positions, then letting that team play hard and have fun.<sup>19</sup>

*Entrepreneurial Leaders.* These leaders possess vision, boundless energy, and a risk-taking spirit. Their distinguishing characteristic is they function best in a start-up operation. They love being told it cannot be done. But once the effort requires steady, ongoing leadership—once things get complex and there are endless discussions about policies, systems, controls, and databases—the entrepreneurial leader loses energy and may even lose focus and confidence. He or she starts to peek over the fence and wonder if there's another start-up project out there. Entrepreneurs often feel guilty at the thought

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<sup>18</sup> Building Church Leaders, “Determining Your Leadership Style.”

<sup>19</sup> Building Church Leaders, “Determining Your Leadership Style.”



of leaving something they gave birth to. But if they think, *I can't give birth to something every few years*, something inside them starts to die. That's their style. It is important in the kingdom.<sup>20</sup>

*Re-engineering Leader.* Some leaders thrive in a situation that has lost vision or focus, or one that has been staffed inappropriately. This kind of leader says, “Oh boy, I get to re-engineer this whole situation.” They find out what the mission was and what it needs to be now. They decide how progress and success will be measured. They love to tune up, heal, and revitalize hurting organizations. But when the group is running on eight cylinders, re-engineering leaders may not want to lead over the long haul. Often, rather than manage what they have re-engineered, they look for another project to overhaul.<sup>21</sup>

*Bridge-building Leader.* This leader brings a wide variety of constituencies together under a single umbrella of leadership so that a complex organization can achieve its mission. This feat requires enormous flexibility in a leader—the ability to compromise and negotiate, to listen, understand, and think outside of the box. It requires not only the ability to be diplomatic; it requires also the gift of being able to relate to diverse people. In a start-up venture, those who share his or her vision surround a leader. Contrast that with a church or parachurch organization made up of scores of well-defined constituencies, many of whom care little about the overall vision of the ministry anymore. They just want to make sure their interests are served.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Building Church Leaders, “Determining Your Leadership Style.”

<sup>21</sup> Building Church Leaders, “Determining Your Leadership Style.”

<sup>22</sup> Building Church Leaders, “Determining Your Leadership Style.”

### **Young Adults and Church Leadership**

The emerging consensus of research shows a growing percentage of young adults are not connected with any religion, although many younger Americans express an interest in spirituality. This reality, along with the general demographic shift toward an older population, rightfully raises concern about young adult participation in religious communities. What is the involvement of young adults in local congregations of all faiths across the United States? And how are faith communities with significant proportion of young adults unique?

The most recent Faith Communities Today national survey of American congregations offers significant insights into this topic. This national survey is a compilation of two random samples of congregations and additional surveys of congregations conducted by twenty-four collaborating organizations representing thirty-two of the country's largest religious traditions and denominations. The final dataset included over 11,000 congregations. The common core questionnaire used in these surveys replicates over 150 items from the 2000, 2005 and 2008 surveys, and includes a special section on the 2008 recession. Faith Communities Today is the largest ongoing research project in America focused on local faith communities. For purposes of this report, a congregation is considered to have significant young adult participation if 21% or more of its participants were eighteen to thirty-four years of age. Across all faiths, a total of only 16% of all congregations were in this category. Clearly, the congregations

with significant young adult participation are not typical of American religious congregations.<sup>23</sup>

The percentage of congregations with significant young adult participation varied considerably among religious traditions and denominations. Young adult involvement in these traditions ranges from 2% at the low end to 26% on the high end. Given this information, it is not be surprising that some faith groups express greater concern about young adult participation than do others.

### *Population Groups*

**Ethnic Minority Groups.** A total of 23% percent of congregations where most of the members are from ethnic minority groups reported a significant number of young adult participants, while only 13% of congregations with a white majority reported the same.

**Suburban Congregations.** There is a similar contrast among congregations located in metropolitan areas and those outside the metropolitan areas. Nearly a quarter of the congregations located in newer suburbs had a significant level of young adult participation, as did one in five of the congregations located in cities and older suburbs. Only 12% of the congregations located in small towns and rural regions outside the metropolitan areas reported the same level of young adult participation.

**Larger Congregations.** How young adult participation may correlate with the size of congregation is less clear in these data, although a mid-size range may be optimal to engage young adults. Congregations with a typical weekend attendance of 301 to 350

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<sup>23</sup> Faith Communities Today, “A Profile of Churches and Other Congregations With Significant Young Adult Participation,” accessed June 25, 2015, <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/profile-churches-and-other-congregations-significant-young-adult-participation>.

were more likely to report a significant percentage of young adult participation than were those congregations with either less or greater attendance. Congregations with higher young adult participation than the national average ranged from 151 to 400 in attendance or had a typical attendance of more than 500 people. Small congregations with an attendance of 150 or less were least likely to report a significant level of young adults.<sup>24</sup>

### **Making Room For Young Adult Leaders**

What some aging Christians need from the younger generation is an invitation to lean into the local church, and not retreat or retire. But others from the older generation need a different challenge—a summons to lay aside suspicion of everyone young enough to be your child, a charge to dispose of a derogatory view of the real-live specimen of the next generation. And, in particular, some older leaders need to hear a plea not to get off the bus, but to aggressively make room for young leaders at the front.<sup>25</sup>

#### *Do Not Despise the Young*

It was a two-part charge the aging apostle gave to his younger-generation protégé in 1 Timothy 4:12: “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.” One part goes to the Millennials (born 1980–2000), along with Gen X (1965–1979): By exhibiting model Christian posture in word and deed, give the older generation no good cause for despising your youth. But the second part is for the Baby Boomers (born 1946–1964), and those

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<sup>24</sup> Faith Communities Today, “A Profile of Churches.”

<sup>25</sup> Desiring God, “Church Make Room for Young Leaders, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/church-make-room-for-young-leaders>.

before them, who overhear the directive like the Ephesian church reading Paul's letter over Timothy's shoulder: By exuding a model Christian disposition toward brothers and sisters in Christ, give the younger generation the benefit of the doubt. Do not expect the worst of fellow believers, regardless of their age. Let the gospel go to work on your subtle age-prejudice.<sup>26</sup>

Larry Osborne is one pastor and author pioneering the way forward on the massive leadership transition that is just under way between the Baby Boomers and their Millennial progeny. Whether in business, government, or the church, many are already feeling the tensions, as what was America's largest generation now awkwardly gives way to its more numerous offspring. Osborne makes the observation that on the high school and college campus, it seems "the freshmen always get smaller." As we age, each year's crop of incoming students seems less impressive than the class before. If this is true of four years on the campus, what about the long arc of adult life? In the church, says Osborne, the seniors never graduate (at least not until they've become literal seniors and start dying off). They hog the leadership table, shutting out the next generation. It is one of the main reasons that most churches stop growing and lose their evangelistic touch (and cultural relevance) around the twenty-year mark.<sup>27</sup>

The Christian vision for leadership is not a tenure model in which whoever's been around longest occupies the seats of privilege and prominence as long as they want. Rather, it's about laboring pro-actively and assertively to raise up younger leaders to fill our slot, and do our job better than we did, which gets at the Great Commission essence of making disciples (Mt 28:19) and applies it to church leadership.

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<sup>26</sup> Desiring God, "Church Make Room for Young Leaders."

<sup>27</sup> Desiring God, "Church Make Room for Young Leaders."

But such a vision of leadership is costly. There's a price to pay, says Osborne. Leadership is a zero-sum game. One person's emerging influence is always another person's waning influence. That is why making room for the young eagles is a hard sell, especially to those who already have a seat at the table. Such a deferential and self-humbling dream for raising up new leaders may seem farfetched in government and business, but should not it have its best chance in the church, where we follow one who came not to be served, but to serve (Mk 10:45)? Do we not believe that true greatness is in service, not in lording it over and exercising authority (Mk 10:42)? We aim "in humility [to] count others more significant" and "look not only to [our] own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil 2:3–4). But are we not, then, compromising wisdom in church leadership by replacing some qualified members of the older generation with those from the younger?<sup>28</sup>

Alongside the plea to the older generation to not abandon the younger for "retirement" is also this request: Do not frown on us young adults, and think we are fools, because we are young. In Christ, and by his Spirit, be on the lookout for the best, and let us have a chance to show you that not all of us are as bad as you might expect. For the advance of the gospel and the good of the church tomorrow and today, do not keep us locked out of leadership. Take the extra initiative to make room at the table for multiple younger voices, and please put in the energy to really hear us out. Before long, the younger generation will be driving the ship. Better to begin handing over the wheel sooner than later, and make the transition a tribute to the age-defying wisdom of God.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Desiring God, "Church Make Room for Young Leaders."

<sup>29</sup> Desiring God, "Church Make Room for Young Leaders."

Sometimes, young leaders make stupid mistakes. Sometimes, more senior leaders shake their heads in dismay, wishing that these foolish young leaders would just listen, learn, and quit being so bullheaded. There are times, however, when young leaders take unfair heat from older leaders because of generational misunderstandings. The broad-brush strokes used are not an attempt to stereotype young or old, but to sort out some misunderstandings that might arise. There are at least four reasons for these misunderstandings; first they might mistake confidence for arrogance. Confidence is an essential leadership trait. No one follows someone unless that person possesses some level of confidence. Sometimes, however, confidence can be viewed as arrogance. And yes, there is sometimes overlap. When an older leader mentors and guides a younger leader, the older leader must be prepared to encounter the younger leader's confidence, without judging it as arrogance. Confidence comes with experience, but it also comes from conviction. Allow confidence to flourish where it is permitted. Without it, the younger cannot lead effectively.<sup>30</sup>

Secondly, they might mistake innovation for insubordination. One mark of a great leader is their ability to come up with innovative solutions to perplexing problems. Solutions change according to the present needs. Today's solutions—pioneered by younger leaders—will look different from the solutions of a decade or two ago. Understandably, change is hard. We tend to resist change, and view it as an affront to our tried and true practices. By its very definition, innovation demands making changes, and

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<sup>30</sup> Share Faith Magazine, "Why Young and Old Leaders Might Clash, accessed June 25, 2015, <http://www.sharefaith.com/blog/2014/03/older-leaders-clash-younger-leaders/>.

introducing new methods or ideas. Such innovations are not by themselves a sign of insubordination.<sup>31</sup>

Thirdly, they might mistake relevance for irreverence. In many cases the relevance idea is overplayed in some church ministries. It is been commandeered as a license for capitulation to worldliness, rather than true gospel-focused contextualization. Nonetheless, some facets of relevance that must be accepted. Perhaps the biggest misunderstanding regarding relevance and irreverence is in the arena of worship music styles. Wisdom and grace should characterize these discussions, and we should work hard to understand the fine line between that which is appropriate relevance and inappropriate irreverence.

Fourthly, they might mistake questioning for rebelling. Younger leaders usually have a lot of questions. For young leaders, asking questions of older people is considered dangerous; they often receive negative responses from others before they produced answers. A young leader who wants to learn asks questions—“Why are we doing it this way? What is the purpose of this? Why can we not we try this? Why is this important? Why is this not working?” Maybe the young leader’s questions come across in the wrong way. Maybe they seemed to be an attack upon time-honored practices. Maybe they came from a heart of arrogance. But maybe the young leader was simply trying to learn. Maybe it is not rebellion at all. The church should be a place where it is safe to ask questions. Even in the realm of leadership, asking questions is often the way to arrive at solutions.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Share Faith Magazine, “Why Young and Old Leaders Might Clash.”

<sup>32</sup> Share Faith Magazine, “Why Young and Old Leaders Might Clash.”



### **Advice for Young and Old Leaders**

Each of the points above is directed towards helping older leaders understand younger leaders. Young leaders, however, should learn from and respect older leaders. Here is some advice for how young leaders can benefit from older leaders, and how older leaders can help younger leaders.

How young leaders can profit from older leaders.

- Glean the wisdom of older leaders.
- Ask their advice, even if you think you know better.
- Respect their advice, even if you don't agree with it.
- Do more asking than teaching.
- Seek to understand their positions rather than throwing out challenges.
- Spend as much time as you can with them.

Older leaders can help younger leaders by doing the following.

- Let them make mistakes.
- Recognize their need to lead, and to eventually replace you.
- Understand their role as the new generation of leaders.
- Acknowledge the changing cultural milieu, and be open to change
- Ask them questions.

The point where young meets old—where the torch is passed, where the lessons are learned and, yes, where tensions can arise—is the perfect opportunity for change, discovery, progress, and power. The church is kaleidoscope of people, perceptions, visions, ages, races, backgrounds, income levels, IQ levels, nationalities, confusions, sanctifications, and personalities. Yes, there will be some friction and disagreement from

time to time. This is nothing new. Regardless of our age, we must embrace our role as leaders and love, learn from, submit to, respect, and humbly work together to exalt the name of Jesus.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Share Faith Magazine, “Why Young and Old Leaders Might Clash.”

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

There are many approaches to integrating young adults in the life of the church, especially in leadership roles. Momentum Magazine says, “With the wide range of ages and styles that exist in most churches, integrating young adults within the mainstream of church life can seem like an impossible task. Yet this mission is possible, and necessary for the long-term success of any young adult ministry.”<sup>1</sup> The benefits of integrated young adult ministry are numerous, including...

- Increased support by church leadership
- Increased opportunities to lead and serve
- Increased influence in the church at large, infusing energy and passion
- Increased doorways into the young adult ministry<sup>2</sup>

Young adult ministry that's integrated into the larger church receives increased support by church leadership. That is because the results of the ministry become more visible when this age ceases to be a church within a church. A strong young adult ministry can produce many capable workers for the church, especially in the areas of children, youth, music, and media. And this excites leadership, especially the senior pastor! Ask your pastor how young adults can serve other ministries, and invite him to

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<sup>1</sup> Momentum Magazine, “Integrating Young Adults In Your Church,” accessed June 26, 2015, [http://momentum.ag.org/yamagazine/article.cfm?targetBay=2bf67eb7-7550-4288-9bde-18d12368218c&ModID=2&Process=DisplayArticle&RSS\\_RSSContentID=26587&RSS\\_OriginatingChannelID=1277&RSS\\_OriginatingRSSFeedID=5184&RSS\\_Source=](http://momentum.ag.org/yamagazine/article.cfm?targetBay=2bf67eb7-7550-4288-9bde-18d12368218c&ModID=2&Process=DisplayArticle&RSS_RSSContentID=26587&RSS_OriginatingChannelID=1277&RSS_OriginatingRSSFeedID=5184&RSS_Source=).

<sup>2</sup> Momentum Magazine, “Integrating Young Adults In Your Church.”

join with others for dinner or coffee after service. Sometimes young adults assume that older leadership cannot understand them, and that the leadership is simply out of touch. But building relationships between the pastor and the group can help bring mutual understanding and friendship. If you feel like the church is not supporting you, perhaps you should ask if you are supporting the church. Are you promoting and serving in the ministries that are vital to the church? Are you well represented at major events and outreaches? Do you know what your church's leadership is passionate about? Do you know their vision, and how young adults fit into that vision?<sup>3</sup>

It is pretty hard to support the goals of the church if you are planning camping trips for the young adults every other weekend, and difficult to serve other ministries if your burgeoning event calendar leaves no margin for involvement in other areas of the church. So make sure your young adult ministry is not an end to itself, but rather see the important role it can play in strengthening your church. Another facet of integration of young adult ministry should be connection with your church's youth. It is a well-documented fact that many leave the church at the age of eighteen, and increasing numbers of them will not return later in life.

Additionally, many young adult ministries have short life spans because the group grows old, and there are insufficient numbers of younger people coming in to replace them. Strong relationships with the youth can turn this endemic problem into a wonderful opportunity. Start building bridges with the youth, (as well as others), in practical ways. Recognize and talk to them when you see them. Occasionally grab dinner with them after church. Engage them in some friendly athletic competition. Conduct a

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<sup>3</sup> Momentum Magazine, "Integrating Young Adults In Your Church."

joint service where responsibilities are shared. When these relationships are built, youth will no longer dread the transition to adulthood, but eagerly anticipate it.<sup>4</sup>

Kathryn Mary Lohre says in her book, *For Such A Time As This: Young Adults on the Future of the Church*, “The church does not need to be about hooking younger generations into the church so that it can return to a past that no longer exists, but about engaging across generations to shape missinonal goals for the future to which God is calling us.” She says, “No matter our ages, our hope as Christians is not a hope for our institutions by a hope for the church—a living, growing community called to share the Good News with the world of what God has accomplished in Jesus Christ. The younger among us have more to say and do than fulfill a demographic void.”<sup>5</sup>

According to Lohre, casting a single vision for the church will not help; only a multiplicity of visions offers hope, especially to youth and young adults. She argues for the church to become bold enough to enhance, reform and enliven itself to give it the possibility to attract new and younger people in order for it to survive. Once the church has been realigned to the purposes of God, it must begin to listen to all the voices of the congregation, not just the older ones and especially those voices that are often ignored and silenced. The church is called to move forward together, one step at a time, into God’s future. In doing so, it can embody the hope that is needed for it to remain vital and sustainable.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Momentum Magazine, “Integrating Young Adults In Your Church.”

<sup>5</sup> Kathryn Mary Lohre and Shantha Alonso, *For Such A Time As This: Young Adults on the Future of the Church* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2014), xii.

<sup>6</sup> Lohre and Alonso, *For Such A Time As This*, 138.

In her book *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, Sharon Daloz Parks frames the primary developmental task of young adulthood as learning how to ask big enough questions and to cultivate dreams that are not simply ambitious but worthwhile. She outlines praxis of mentoring aimed to draw out these worthy dreams and suggests congregations may be one place where such mentoring relationships can thrive. Her theory of young adult faith development suggests the extreme cultural relativism many young adults express is a functional but typically temporary phase in the process of becoming a self-actualized adult.<sup>7</sup>

Parks says, chronological aged does not serve as a consistent indicator and the rites of passage that might mark that threshold are varied: obtaining a driver's license, social security card, or credit card; sexual experimentation; reaching the legal drinking age, graduation from high school, college, or professional school; marrying or partnering; full-time employment, establishing one's one residence; parenting a child, becoming eligible to vote, etc. Each of these serves to some degree as a cultural indicator of adulthood, yet the legally established age for these rights of passage ranges from sixteen to twenty-one. However, in the church, the right to serve the kingdom of God is based on giftedness to serve which no age can determine; only God.<sup>8</sup>

As part of the mentoring process suggested by Parks, faith is a significant element in the process. Parks says, "Faith is a strong work with a venerable history that dwells at the core of human life. Yet for others, faith has simply become a matter of preference. This ongoing, meaning-making motion of faith is named in many traditions as the activity

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<sup>7</sup> Sharon Daloz Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams* (San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 17.

<sup>8</sup> Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 18.

of spirit and Spirit. Across traditions, the word spirit is typically rooted in words such as air, breath, wind; the experience of power moving unseen. Faith is formed and transformed in the unseen but sometimes deeply felt motion of ongoing life. As we begin to see, it may be said that it is the strategy of Spirit—or if one prefers, the deep current of life—to release our tight hold on the foreground of life and turn toward the background over and over again. We are perpetually invited to participate more consciously in the deep motion of faith, learning to wonder in a larger frame and awakening to bigger questions and dreams.”<sup>9</sup> In order to mentor young adults effectively, older adults but be mindful of the work of the Spirit that is constantly calling from among the body of believers those who have been called, anointed, equipped and appointed to lead and serve God’s church. To do otherwise creates a false sense of faith and dilutes the significance of the wonderworking power of God.<sup>10</sup>

All growing congregations include young adults in visible leadership roles within the church. Those roles involve varying degrees of commitment—from serving as occasional readers, musicians, and worship planners to chairing committees or serving as clergy. Growing churches deliberately seeks young adult leadership to ensure it will thrive in the long term. A once dying but now thriving church in Waco, Texas, has a transient population of college students at its core leadership within the congregation. A small group of older adults regularly joins students in worship. These adults see themselves in a supporting or mentoring role, appreciating the chance to see young adults test themselves by putting ambitious ministry ideas into practice. Brother John of Taizé

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<sup>9</sup> Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 44.

<sup>10</sup> Parks, *Big Questions, Worthy Dreams*, 98.

writes "when given responsibility, [young adults] very often rise to it." Relationships grounded in mutual trust are key to sharing the power and responsibilities that come with leadership roles.<sup>11</sup>

Larry Braskamp studied faith-based colleges' investment in students' development. His advice to colleges also applies to congregations. He argues, "community is most effective in fostering student development when students regard it as a community of support and challenge." Many congregations that reach out to young adults begin and end their ministry with hospitality: providing a safe, non-judgmental environment. Hospitality is crucial, but those who study young adult development argue that young adults both expect and deserve more from religious communities. As Sharon Daloz-Parks would say, they deserve mentors who will support them through crises and encourage them to dream worthwhile dreams for their future.<sup>12</sup>

Three congregational "best practices" are particularly inspiring for young adults: dynamic, participatory, and emotionally engaging worship; invested clergy; and opportunities to serve. Young adults are often associated with "contemporary" styles of worship argue that many of the features associated with contemporary worship—such as praise music and an informal setting—most appeal to the Baby Boomer generation. Best Practices finds eighteen to twenty-nine year-olds report valuing traditional and contemporary worship about evenly. More important to them is worship that engages both brain and body. It is no coincidence that congregations with active young adult membership often emphasize arts and music. Young adults (21-45) who pray or meditate

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<sup>11</sup>LiErin Probasco, "Congregational Engagement of Young Adults: A Review of the Literature," accessed June 26, 2015, <http://faithcommunitiestoday.org/sites/faithcommunitiestoday.org/files/A%20Review%20of%20the%20Young%20Adult%20Literature.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> Probasco, "Congregational Engagement of Young Adults."



regularly are more likely to do so while listening to music than while reading the Bible or a devotional guide. Compared to older adults, they draw fewer boundaries between secular and sacred music. Whereas older adults are more likely to report being inspired by “church music”—classical, traditional hymns, and even Christian pop music, younger adults find spiritual inspiration from music they listen to everyday.<sup>13</sup>

The mosaic is a way of getting young adults involved in leadership in the church. In Henry Nouwen book *Who Can Drink The Cup*, Nouwen writes, "Community is like a large mosaic. Each little piece seems so insignificant. One piece is bright red, another cold blue or dull green, another warm purple, another sharp yellow, another shining gold. Some look precious, others ordinary. Some look valuable, others worthless; some look gaudy, others delicate. As individual stones, we can do little with them except compare them and judge their beauty and value. When, however, all these little stones are brought together in one big mosaic portraying the face of Christ, who would ever question the importance of any one of them? If one of them, even the least spectacular one, is missing, the face is incomplete. Together in the one mosaic, each little stone is indispensable and makes a unique contribution to the glory of God. That's community, a fellowship of little people who together make God visible in the world." Rather than trying to judge who is in and who is out, we should focus on the part we are called to play in completing God's design. And through that design, may we help make God visible in the world."<sup>14</sup>

According to Nouwen’s book, the goal of developing young adult leaders in the church is based on every person playing their part by using the gifts that God has given

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<sup>13</sup> Probasco, “Congregational Engagement of Young Adults.”

<sup>14</sup> Henri J. M. Nouwen, *Can You Drink the Cup?* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 1996), 58.

them to glorify God's kingdom. When older adults refuse to allow young adults to participate in the leadership of the church, they are limiting what God can do in the church based on the members who make up that body of Christ. Since it takes all members to be jointly fitted together to make a complete congregation, it stands to reason that when young adults are equipped and called into service by God, age is trumped by the power and wisdom of God to work in the life of willing young adults to perform their assigned tasks as assigned by God.

The late family systems theorist and leadership expert Edwin Friedman (author of *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* and *A Failure of Nerve: Leadership in the Age of the Quick Fix*) observed that, in any human community, rational processes drive only a part of what is really going on at any given moment. Within congregations we have identified two other drivers that are competing for control of the bus. Operating just behind our daily awareness, emotional and symbolic drivers have destinations of their own. And if we do not know how and when they are operating, they can drive us badly off purpose, no matter how great our strategic plan is.<sup>15</sup>

Consider a board meeting in a congregation. A recently developed plan for ministry renewal and growth included a recommendation to renovate the historic church sanctuary. The engineering report was complete. The architectural work was done. The financial plan was sound. All three aimed at showing how the space could better serve the congregation's ministry now and in the future. Many volunteers were invested in the process. For the first time in a long time there was an air of anticipation and optimism.

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<sup>15</sup> Diane J Strickland, Joel S. Den Haan, "Congregations," 34 no. 3 Sum 2008:19, accessed June 26, 2015, ATLASerials, Religion Collection, EBESCOhost.

The board members were ready to move ahead—except for one long-standing, influential individual who disagreed. "I don't care about architects and engineers and feasibility studies," this individual argued. "I don't feel that my church home—the place where my grandfather was married and buried—should be turned into a multipurpose theatre aimed at entertaining people. And I know there are a number of others—big donors, too—who agree with me. I can not guarantee they will not pull their donations if this project goes ahead."<sup>16</sup>

Suddenly, the board was afraid—afraid of conflict that would spread, afraid of financial collapse, afraid it would be perceived as disrespecting the history of the church, afraid of offending or even hurting people they and others looked up to. As you might expect, regardless of all the planning and studying aimed at proving the viability of the project, the board stepped back from its commitment. Without a worship space that supported the planned ministry direction, everything was scaled back, including the anticipation, the optimism, and the actual ministry results. But boy, did they start with a great plan! What happened here? Forces were at work that arose from somewhere besides the rational, logical world of research and planning. In this situation (and in others that may come to mind) emotional and symbolic issues can launch drivers that take over the wheel and steer congregations off purpose.<sup>17</sup>

The above paragraphs are a not so surprising reality in local congregations when it comes to young adults in leadership. There are emotional and symbolic drivers in almost every ministry of the church, especially when it comes to decision-making. These behind the scenes drivers are one of the primary reasons for the decline of attendance

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<sup>16</sup> Strickland, and Haan, "Congregations," 20.

<sup>17</sup> Strickland, and Haan, "Congregations," 20.

among young adults in many churches. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, young adults have become experts at multi-tasking and are hardly ready to be subverted from giving of themselves to the work of the church at the hands of those who seek to keep the church from growing and reaching its full potential. In many cases, out of frustration, young adults either stop going to church altogether or find a growing church that welcomes the gifts and talents they are able to provide.

Strickland and Haan offer indicators to spot and sequester both emotional and symbolic drivers in the local church as well as offer the rationale for their behavior. These indicators and rationale are important for every church seeking to engage young adults in meaningful service and leadership in the church in an effort to chart a path forward for its future vitality and sustainability.

For Emotional Drivers:

- 1) Does your congregation have "buttons" that, when pushed, trigger irrational responses and behaviors?
- 2) Within your congregation are there any dysfunctional patterns of emotional behavior of which you are already aware (for example, temper tantrums, emotional pleas for sympathy, the spreading of rumors and misinformation, a tendency to worry about particular people's feelings, or anger that's vented in the parking lot instead of in conversations where people directly address one another)?
- 3) When have those patterns emerged?
- 4) 4 Have these patterns ever driven decisions that contradicted or defeated any existing rational plan?

For Symbolic Drivers:

- 1) Are there places, things, or people in your church who can't be disturbed or changed in any way (for instance, a particular sanctuary fixture, a name, a long-standing leader in a women's group)? Take your symbolic inventory

- 2) Are there rituals and activities that simply must happen every year, regardless of whether or not they support planned priorities (such as a community fowl supper, a rummage sale, a certain Christmas ritual on a certain Sunday, or the annual Easter egg hunt at a certain family's house every year) Create your symbolic calendar

For Rational Drivers:

And finally—and only after you have considered the other two processes—get back to considering the rational drivers of your bus.

- 1) Get a copy of what your congregation has in print to govern its overall planning and direction mission statements, core values statements, etc. How has this material been used—if at all—in your experience?
- 2) Are these statements actually helpful in supporting the kinds of outcomes toward which you are now aiming? Can you define the outputs for which the statements are actually aiming? Do your statements adequately account for the "throughput" influences (those of the emotional and symbolic drivers) in your congregation? If not, do they need to be set aside until after the emotional and symbolic drivers are identified more clearly?<sup>18</sup>

### **Are Young Adults Really Ready for Leadership**

Mark Oestreicher raises a critical question regarding young adult leadership in an article published on the Church Leaders site entitled, "Should Young Adults Serve as Youth Ministry Leaders?" The article begins with this statement, "If young adult brains aren't yet fully formed (particularly in the areas responsible for wisdom and decision making), what implications does that have for working with young adult volunteers?" While Oestreicher would like to think his young adult leaders are ready, the reality he would not like to admit is—on average they are physiologically limited in wisdom, decision-making, prioritization, impulse control, and other skills. A part of his struggle is that he is still very unconvinced that the whole teenage brain thing is a nature thing (god's design, you might say), and is more likely to be a nurture thing (the result of our

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<sup>18</sup> Strickland, and Haan, "Congregations," 20.

collective restrictions on young adults, keeping them from moving into adulthood or using their brains as adults). And, as Oestreicher buys into the notion that young adults (and even teenagers—particularly older teenagers) are fully capable—whether behavioral indicators show this or not—of “being adult,” Oestreicher says he is forced to wrestle with a few things.<sup>19</sup>

First, Oestreicher does not believe that extended adolescence is a fault of young adults. While there will always be slackers, he thinks it wiser for us to examine ourselves, our culture, our churches, our homes, and stop pointing the finger of judgment at twenty-somethings. Collectively, we have created the culture that isolates teenagers and young adults from adults and adulthood; we have created extended adolescence. They are merely living into our expectations (“You’re not yet an adult”).

Secondly, it seems possible for some (a few) post-high school teenagers and young 20-somethings to step into adulthood, in some cases very quickly, to reverse the extended adolescent trend, or at least side-step it. Here, Oestreicher is talking about an average eighteen to twenty-one year old newly leaning into the capabilities they already possess. What is required? In short: meaningful responsibility and expectation (can you see where this is going, as it pertains to young adults in youth ministry?).

Thirdly, do not compare your experience as a young adult in youth ministry, in 1982, to that of young adults today. Not the same thing, and you are probably being revisionist in your memory.

Fourthly, many church leaders thought the best response was to hire a ‘young adults pastor’ and create a new pocket of isolation, keeping ‘emerging adults’

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<sup>19</sup> Mark Oestreicher, Church Leadership, “Should Young Adults Serve as Youth Ministry Leaders?” accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.churchleaders.com/youth/youth-leaders-blogs/162600-young-adults-as-youth-ministry-volunteers.html>.

disconnected from the adult world. Of course, this is all spun under the banner of “let’s create a space that’s uniquely theirs” (which often actually means, “let’s create a space for them so my space can stay uniquely mine”).

Fifthly, the young adults serving on the middle school team were the sharpest of the two-dozen young adults in the church, and—on average—ahead of the curve on the plodding move to adulthood.<sup>20</sup>

Ultimately, Oestreicher believes the answer to his question is not to “boundary” or limit young adults in youth ministry. Maybe there is a need to take the counter-intuitive step of giving them more responsibility. Or, just, giving them the responsibility we would give any adult, without a bunch of coddling and handholding. Meaningful responsibility, spending time with adults (on an age-diverse ministry team), all covered in a watchful layer of intentionality and a leaning toward developing volunteers of all sorts might just be the best young adult ministry possible.<sup>21</sup>

Joe LaGuardia, Senior Pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Conyers, Georgia, says, “If young adults are becoming economically empowered in the marketplace and taking ownership of an independent future, they have the potential to take more ownership in local churches.” It is said that the people who pay for and run the church are from older generations. That is true based on LaGuardia’s experience. People from previous generations provide most of the leadership in church and clams in the coffers. Therefore, LaGuardia says it is time for young adults to grow up. Without young adults, many

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<sup>20</sup> Oestreicher, Church Leadership.

<sup>21</sup> Oestreicher, Church Leadership.

churches—the congregations that nurtured and raised them in the faith are having a difficult time meeting its potential.<sup>22</sup>

Today's church needs young adults investments of time, money and creative leadership. Now that they have some money to spend and independence from debt, it is time to get serious about church. This should have been a commitment despite these factors, but now the excuses are diminishing. When jobs are prevalent, housing is stable, and debts are fewer, a budget that includes tithes and offerings—and a time-management plan that includes God—must be a priority. Now let me be bold with local churches: You need to let young adults lead committees, craft liturgies and ministries that meet a diverse set of needs, and take ownership of a few things we have been afraid to surrender.

LaGuardia has seen this work very effectively at a local church in Conyers, Georgia. The attendance of their young adults ministry has increased almost fourfold over the last several years. Their church found renewed vigor in crafting a vision that includes their participation. But this only happened because the church took brave, strategic steps in getting young adults involved. They asked young adults to head committees, create new ministries, and participate in fellowship opportunities that widened the church's welcome to other young families. It should be noted that this congregation has not moved to contemporary worship with fancy technology or marketing.

Many churches think they need to have praise songs and be tech-savvy to attract young adults, but that's not the case. Young adults want to take ownership and have input. They want to feel connected without having to sacrifice what they value most: a

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<sup>22</sup> Joe LaGuardia, Ethics Daily.com, "Young Adults Must Step Up into Church Leadership, accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.ethicsdaily.com/young-adults-must-step-up-into-church-leadership-cms-22468>.



voice in church leadership. Of course, this assumes young adults have a voice worth listening to, which is not always the case.<sup>23</sup>

Today's generation needs to step up and pay their dues, work hard and prove that churches can count on them. Young adults must earn trust and credibility to be congregational leaders. They can no longer expect the church to be there for them when they are not there for the church. The church—and the younger adult generations—is at a pivotal place in history. Young adults need to stand up for the local church and keep it going. They need to lead it into a future in which creative entrepreneurship will be the church's greatest ministry engines to meet the needs of tomorrow and the day after that.<sup>24</sup>

### **Young Adults Value Mentoring**

We are living in an interesting time in history. For what is likely the first time in the history of the Christian church, generations are not worshiping together. It now appears normal to see older generations meeting together wearing suits and singing hymns, boomers wearing Hawaiian shirts and singing peppy songs about how Jesus changed their lives, and emerging generations meeting in dark rooms singing in minor keys. But, from an historical perspective, this is not normal. Beyond that, it is ultimately harmful to the church.

### **Mentor Relationship**

Interestingly enough, it is not what young adults actually want, either. Far from a "leave us alone" mentality, today's young adults are very interested in learning from,

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<sup>23</sup> LaGuardia, Ethics Daily.com.

<sup>24</sup> LaGuardia, Ethics Daily.com.

interacting with, and forming bonds with previous generations. This desire for connection with people outside of their age demographic can be seen as a subset of the overall desire for relationships and community, but because of the specific and unique nature of these particular relationships, the characteristic of "connection" stands on its own. According to our research: 45 % of unchurched young adults identified the opportunity to receive advice from people with similar life experiences as very important; 68 % of church young adults identified the opportunity to receive advice from people with similar life experiences as very important.<sup>25</sup>

After seeing the statistics above and hearing the overwhelming voice of young adults regarding this matter, a couple of conclusions can be drawn, one very broad and one very specific: Both church and unchurched young adults desire a maximum number of small group activities that promote relationship and belonging. Both church and unchurched young adults desire a maximum number of opportunities to connect with a mentor.

### **Women Mentor Relationship**

Young adults place heavy value on connecting with people who have more life experience than they do. Some would call this mentoring or cross-generational ministry; the bottom line is that they want to learn from someone else's experiences. Mentoring is a biblical idea. Although the word "mentor" itself is never used in scripture, the principles applied when using that terminology are found throughout the biblical text. We see numerous examples of mentoring relationships taking place throughout the Bible. In

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<sup>25</sup> Life Way, "Have A Mentor: Be A Mentor- The Biblical Model of Mentoring," accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Biblical-model-of-mentoring>.

some cases, individuals were involved in multiple mentoring relationships. Sometimes mentoring happened on a one-to-one basis, and in other cases, mentoring took place in a group setting. However, the group was always small enough to listen to, and interact with, each individual. Jesus mentored twelve, sometimes three and, on rare occasions, one.<sup>26</sup>

Jethro mentored Moses. Moses mentored Joshua and the elders of Israel. And Joshua mentored the other remaining leaders of his army. Eli mentored Samuel. Samuel mentored Saul and David. Ahithophel and Nathan the prophet also mentored David. David became Israel's greatest king. David mentored his army commanders and government officials to establish the united nation of Israel. David also mentored Solomon. Solomon mentored the Queen of Sheba, who returned to her people with his wisdom in the form of Proverbs that applied God's laws. Elijah mentored Elisha. Elisha mentored king Jehoash and others. Daniel mentored Nebuchadnezzar, who humbled himself before God. Mordecai mentored Esther. Esther mentored King Artaxerxes, which led to the liberation of God's people. Priscilla and Aquila mentored Apollos, and this resulted in a much-improved ministry for Apollos. And finally, Jesus mentored the twelve apostles who established the Christian church. The apostles mentored hundreds of other leaders, including Paul. Paul mentored Titus, Timothy, and many others. Timothy mentored "faithful men" such as Epaphras. Epaphras and the other faithful men mentored others also, which led to a chain reaction that resulted in dozens of new churches in Asia. Ultimately, this specific mentoring chain is the beginning point of our churches today.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Life Way, "Have A Mentor."

<sup>27</sup> Life Way, "Have A Mentor."

These scriptural references are not necessarily meant to show that young adults desire relationships of this nature because they want to follow the biblical model. However, emerging generations recognize almost naturally that they have a lot to learn, and the Bible affirms a relationship model that can be used to meet that need. Moreover, because they live with such an experiential interest in life, that learning process is most effective walking side-by-side with someone, rather than just sitting in a classroom. Terry Hershey says that there is something of the disciples “wait-and-see attitude in all of us. Leaders are reluctant to start something new because of the risk factor. They are worried about rallying behind any cause because they might get labeled. Leaders are ambivalent about throwing all their energy into a particular ministry idea, because it might succeed and then, “What will they do?” Or, “What is my idea falls flat on its face?” Usually leaders carve a comfortable road of mediocrity because they are afraid of both failure and success.<sup>28</sup>

Leaders may experience some of these emotions as well. They may feel inadequate because their ministry with young adults is not as effective as it should be. Leaders may wish their situations were different—more ideal. They may feel unqualified or ill prepared to minister with young adults. And they may wonder whether this is the right step to take. These feelings and doubts are normal. But Jesus gives today’s leaders the same promise He gave to the disciples in the first chapter of Acts. They were told that they were free to risk and attempt great things for God because the Jesus who left them is faithful to his promise to live in them as they minister in His name.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Terry Hershey, *Young Adult Ministry: Step-by-Step Help for Starting or Revitalizing Your Ministry With People Ages 18-35* (Loveland, CO: Group Publishing, Inc., 1986), 258.

<sup>29</sup> Hershey, *Young Adult Ministry*, 258.

Let us learn effective skills. Let us learn to recognize barriers. Let us learn to adequately identify needs. But let us never forget that Jesus is faithful to the end. He will not give up on our ministries. Young adult ministry is not easy. But now that we know that, we can get about the task. It will not always be easy to measure success. It will be frustrating to deal with transiency. It will be tempting to play the numbers game. It will be a challenge to give the ministry away. But, in the end, it will be worth it. You may not see the harvest, but the important thing to remember is that leaders are planting seeds. Keep planting with integrity and hope. And remember, Jesus is faithful. He will not quit.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Hershey, *Young Adult Ministry*, 258.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **PROJECT ANALYSIS**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this doctoral project is to create of model for seamlessly incorporating young adults into significant leadership positions at New Mt. Zion AME Church (NMZAMEC) in Tallahassee, Florida. This study should allow the membership to embrace young adults as being worthy and qualified to serve in significant leadership capacities while allowing the leadership to mirror the young adult demographic within the congregation. The goal was to reveal a welcoming climate to young adults by elevating their colleagues to decision making positions within the church that allow their voices to be heard and their issues to be at the table when programming decisions are being made. The results of this project will be incorporated within the leadership manual at New Mt Zion. It will also be used as a part of the new member curriculum.

It is common within the connectional African Methodist Episcopal Church to reserve significant leadership roles (i.e. Stewards and Trustee) for senior adults or for adults that can make a significant financial contribution to the local church. There is a climate that suggests that young adults leadership should be relegated to youth ministry and or hip hop summits that are programmed specifically for their age brackets. The young adult steward and or trustee are generally frowned upon for fear of not being prepared or “seasoned” enough to serve in such a great capacity. Stewards and Trustees

are coveted positions and any position given to a young adult is viewed as a wasted opportunity for a vested individual to serve. It is important for the church to get on board and begin to see the importance of allowing young adults to serve in these significant capacities as a means of connecting with individuals who will secure the vitality of the local church for years to come. The AME denomination has taken note of a mass exodus of the young adult population in many congregations across the connectional church. It is the intention of this project to provide a solution to the problem of mass exodus and cause mass influx.

New Mt Zion AMEC is located in Tallahassee, Florida. Florida's capital city boast of three major institutions of higher learning: Florida State University, Florida A&M University, and Tallahassee Community College. These three institutions have secured Tallahassee's status as a "college town." It is inevitable that many sanctuaries be inundated with college-aged individuals every Sunday morning. NMZAMEC is no exception. Three (3) Sunday Morning services serve nearly 1,000 individuals with the 11:30 a.m. worship service (the 3<sup>rd</sup> service) being predominately young adults. An interesting element to the city is not everyone leaves the city once they finish with their undergraduate degrees. Many of them settle in the city and a great deal further their education through post-graduate studies.

Embracing these individuals is a pivotal element to the survival of the churches in the area. Incorporating qualified, competent and spirit-filled individuals into Steward/Trustee positions in the church can only foster an environment that exemplifies the welcoming atmosphere. I am of the opinion that there is a necessity to infuse young adult leadership into each and every facet of the church. The problem is that the

leadership in many if not all of the ministries including those that we are focusing on in this study is all inundated with those that are dreaming dreams rather than seeing visions.

This project was based on the hypothesis that if the majority of the congregation embraces young adults in significant leadership roles, a more accepting environment would emerge that would cause other young adults to become active in the church. The expected results would foster an influx of young adults that would lead to the longevity of NMZAMEC and its vital role in the community. It would also give rise to the untapped potential and untapped people as well as resources that will help the forge a productive ministry based environment. Finally, it would open the minds of those that have held leadership positions for many years so that they will embrace new ideas and a refined approach for reaching all generations. This project solicited the participation of the entire church, and was led and facilitated by the senior pastor, peer associates and context associates of the New Mt Zion AME Church in Tallahassee, Florida.

### **Methodology**

A qualitative research method was used to facilitate this project. The nature of the questions was designed to ascertain the openness of the recipients to accept young adults in significant leadership capacities. Three methods were used to collect data: pre and post surveys, sermons and Bible studies. The pre and post surveys were given to recipients to gain an understanding of their awareness of the leadership and who serves in those positions and the nature of their understanding of what those positions entail. Questions were designed to also gain a general consensus on whether not who leads the church was important to them. The sermon series was designed to educate on movements throughout



church history and African American history that were lead by young adults. The sermons covered Old Testament and New Testament figures that served as good examples of the potency of young adult leaders. The Bible studies were empowerment series that served as a rally cry for individuals that are interested in leading and to spawn the interest of those who were not aware that leadership opportunities were available to them.

### **Project Calendar**

The timeline that was used to facilitate the execution of this project is as follows:

June-July, 2015 – Meet with context associates to give them an overview of the project and dates, expectations, how to compile important information, and discussion of availability for the development of inventory and questionnaire.

August 9	Strong emphasis given to the construction of survey.
August 23	Present project to congregation
August 23 - September 13	Continue to arouse interest in project through announcements and sign-up in church Narthex
September 19	Complete Pre-Project Survey
September 20	Sermon 1
September 27	Sermon 2
October 7, 14	Bible Study
October 14	Distribute Post Survey
Oct 18, 24-25	Overall Compilation and analysis of survey

## **Implementation**

The emphasis of this chapter is to provide an analysis and interpretation of the data that was collected during the project that was conducted at New Mt Zion AME Church. At the initial stage of this project, the Context Associates were selected and informed of the scope of the project. The team consisted of ten individuals: five senior adults (ages 45-70), five young adults (ages 21-40). The team was committed to the project and worked diligently in involving the church at large, as well as creating the pre and post survey. There was a great deal of participation with the project and the masses were excited to assist with the gathering of data. The schedule was announced and sent out via email. Wednesday night Bible study was used as a time to introduce the project and help to people to understand the impetus behind the upcoming series of sermons, Bible studies, and surveys.

The pastor gave a clear overview of the project and invited all willing participants to stay behind and gather as much information as possible. A packet was given to the participants that explained the project in detail. After a period of question and answers, each person agreed to participate in the project signed the consent form. The pre survey was given to ascertain the participant views before the sermon and Bible study series. The pre-survey and the post survey were the same questions which was intentional to see if the their answers would remain the same after they were exposed to the sermon and Bible study series and other details on the project.

## Sermons

After completion of the pre-survey, the senior pastor preached two sermons dealing with allowing the young adult movement to take its course. Each participant in the project was given a DVD of the message to further analyze the content of the messages. The sermons were designed to arouse the suspicion of the members of how effective young adults would be if given the opportunity to work within the framework of leadership. The intent was to push, using a very contemporary method in the life of David and the importance of his leadership and taking on task while being a young adult. The first sermon; “Change Clothes and Go” was designed to highlight the importance of allowing David to be comfortable in his position. Saul tried to dress David in his own clothes in order to take on the Philistine Goliath. David’s argument was clear, he could not use Saul’s garments because he was not use to them. The second sermon was entitled, “Prepared for What’s Next.” This message was designed to also highlight through the life of David the importance of preparation for any task. David was being groomed for leadership before even he realized it. David was groomed for leadership through his bouts with lions and bears.

### *Change Clothes And Go! 1 Samuel 17:38-40*

#### Introduction

We are serious about our clothes! When it comes down to our clothes it is a serious matter and it is not a game! The process of matching up everything.... In style...! If not you will be immediately talked about...“Look at what she has on,” The latest in fashion icons or it can be old favorites like Michael Kors, Louis V, Prada, Gucci,

Versace, just to name a few! We are extremely serious about our outfit! Our clothes make us stand out, our clothes for most of us in our identity; it is our introduction before you actually meet us. Doc, You clean. I do however want to suggest, that it is equally if not more important that you not only dress your body, but also dress your spirit! In times like these, it is going to take more than we have been giving! Our kids are exposed. It's time for a change in clothes.

## Introduction II

It does not fit anymore! It was a time when it did fit, but it simply does not fit anymore. Just because you can get it on does not mean it fits! Someone else is wearing the same outfit! Somebody has to change, even if you wearing it better, somebody has to change!

Nothing worse than a cheap copy! Copy machine, the more you copy the more quality you lose! It look better on the wrack then it does on you! I do not want to look like nobody I do not want to sound like nobody, God gave me a ME ANOINTING! We got it dirty! All people are going to see is the stain! Good looking outfit messed up because of a little stain! That means all of us need to change!!!! Some stains are hard to get out! Shout!

## Text

There is a conflict that exists generationally, in the world and in the church as it relates to physical and spiritual clothes. One such conflict is revealed in the text!

We all know the story of David and Goliath. I am not going to get to the whole story. Our emphasis begins in verse 38!

Verse 38-39. Stop dressing children in adult clothes! There is nothing worse than trying to send your children out to fight with all the wrong clothes on. It is what worked for me. What worked for you may not work for them! They can do more with less. The cell phone, you have got to know what they are fighting with. He tried walking around because he was not use to them; passing down generational weight!

Verse 39. I cannot go in these, because I am not used to them! I cannot fight with weapons that I am not use to carrying!

Close

So he took them off...! Shepherd staff, five smooth stones. He chose five all he needed was one. This generation understands, its not that you hit the target, but if you hit the target in the right spot! You come against me with sword, and spear, and Javelin, but I come against you in the Name of the Lord! *Change clothes and Go!*

*Prepared For What's Next! 1 Samuel 17:32-37*

Introduction

If we knew what tomorrow holds we would better prepare for tomorrow. The truth is if we knew what tomorrow held we would only prepare precisely and exactly for what we are going to face. Beloved allow me to make a deposit to the cisterns of your spirit this morning and tell you since you do not know what tomorrow holds; prepare for everything! One of the ways that we can prepare for tomorrow is by being intentional about who we allow in our space. One of our biggest downfalls is whom you allow in your space. Space is: Valuable. Limited. Not For Sale!

We have allowed the Devil in our space. The devil has been overtly bold! The devil used to have the characteristics of a fox, meaning he was cunning and sneaky, tactful and precise. But now the devil has gotten bold, the devil does not take the back door the devil takes the front door, and then announces his presence. The Devil is calling our bluff, it used to be a time when the devil would hide, now the devil is in your face asking you what are you going to do about it! That is a good question this morning, the devil is in your mind, what are you going to do about it, the devil has attacked your family, what are you going to do about it, the devil has your son and your daughter doing all kinds of crazy stuff, what are you going to do about it, the devil has attacked your marriage what are you going to do about it? I need about ten folks here that refuse to sit there and do nothing while the devil does any and everything...! I'm prepared for whatever comes next!

#### Text

There is a familiar face in our text for this morning! We all know the story of the shepherd boy David! By now we know that he is the youngest of Jesse's eight sons. We know that he is young and handsome and is the tender of the sheep. We also know that he has the anointing but is continuously overlooked! His brothers are gifted but he has the anointing!

Let me take a quick pause to encourage you, just because you are anointed does not mean you will not be overlooked! As a matter of fact, some folks will overlook you purposely, because every time you get an opportunity to do something, you always knock it out of the ballpark! And it is not that you are trying to show off, it is not that you are trying to purposely out-do everybody, but it's something about the anointing in you, it

stands up every single time its supposed to! Watch this, there have been times when you pulled back purposely, because you did not want the other people around you to feel intimidated, but its something about the anointing that puts you in position where you can't help yourself.

Man will not ever totally understand your anointing because MAN did not give it to you!

- So we have the Champion of the Philistine army Goliath, doing a lot of trash talking everyday!
- He was looked down on because of his Youth! Young Adults have been major contributors to life and society, but you must give them a chance!
- Young Adults in leadership makes the difference!

Verses 32-33 – Let no one lose heart on account of this Philistine, I will go down and fight him. You are not able to go down and fight against this Philistine you are only a young man he has been a warrior since his youth.

- It's something about when you've got fight in you, you never back down from anything. Even if it looks like a big one!

Verse 34 – I have been keeping the sheep, when a lion or bear came and carried off a sheep from the flock, I came after it! David's job was to protect the sheep.... Not protect the sheep until the lion and the bear came, David's job was to protect the sheep! That's the difference between being prepared and anointed, because the one who is not prepared and not anointed, let's the lion and bear carry off a sheep every day and counts his loses. The problem with that is, that Lion and that bear will now count your sheep's pen as a source of food and will return everyday or every time he's hungry. But if you are not scared, and go after what the Lion and Bear stole, when they see your sheep the next time, they will not think food, they'll think about David, and he will never have to worry

about them again! Fight him now, and YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HIM AGAIN!

Verse 36 – Here comes the preparation, Your servant has killed both lion and bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, because he has defied the army of the living God. David recognizes that the Lion was never about the Lion and the Bear was never about the Bear, they were all preparation for Goliath. Some of the fights that you are in, you thought it was the big fight, but God let you go through that to show how much fight you had in you. There might be a bigger fight ahead, but the small fights the sparing matches, were preparation for the main event. You have been in some fights and you may be tired of fighting, but there may be a greater fight ahead of you, that is the bad news... the Good News is found in verse 32—The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of the Philistine! The same God!

#### Points

If I have got to fight, I am prepared for it, because I have:

1. Power
2. Position
3. Praise! Close!

#### **Bible Study**

The Bible Study was given on two parts and it was centered around making the most of an opportunity.



*This is My Moment! Mark 10:46-52*

Opportunity - Are You Ready for God to open up new possibilities for you? What does "new opportunity look like for you?" I have 1,000,000: Tell me the five-year plan for your life. Tell me five scriptures related to your future.

*Are you ready to advance*

Have you fulfilled your assignment where you are right now? Have you learned everything that you are supposed to learn with where you are right now.

*Have You Learned?*

You have to be taught. There is no way around it! This is my moment! Verses 46 - 47 advises, when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth. This was his Chance. Do not be quiet when it is your chance! He refused to let Jesus pass him by! Since Jesus was in his vicinity! Get it! He *heard*, then he began to *Cry Out*! Use what you have!

A part of *Learning* from where you are is learning to appreciate what you have!

- Health
- Sanity
- Time
- Support

Have mercy on me—Give me something that I know I do not deserve while I am asking.

Verse 48 - Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet! They do not understand! They have theirs, but he Made More Noise.

verse 49 - God has a way of making people respect you!

verse 51 - What do you want Jesus to do for you?

Vers 52 - I want to see—One blessings that is the root—a root blessing!

**YOUR FAITH HAS HEALED YOU!!**

### **Survey**

1. Do you value leadership at the local church level?

Yes = 80%

No = 10%

Undecided = 10%

2. Do you know the roles and functions of the Stewards/Trustees?

Yes= 65%

No= 35%

3. Is the leadership team effective in the local church?

Yes= 80%

No= 20%

4. Do you feel accepted at New Mt Zion?

Yes=90%

No= 10%

5. What is your age?

18-25 = 20%

26-40 = 30%

41-60 = 40%

61 and older = 10%

6. How hands-on should leaders be in decision-making?

Very Involved = 95%

Not involved = 5%

7. Are you positively impacted by your experience of dealing with Stewards/Trustees?

Yes= 62%

No= 30%

Undecided = 8%

8. Does the ages of the leadership reflect the overall ages of the congregation?

Yes= 55%

No= 45%

9. How long have you been a member of New Mt. Zion?

0-10 years = 45%

10-20 years = 45%

over 20 = 10%

10. Do you feel that the current leadership is open to participation from younger members in their ranks?

40% - No, reasons include:

- Older members are territorial
- It seems that you must be a “big giver” to be in leadership
- You have to know the right people to be asked to serve.

30% - Yes, reasons include:

- The current leadership encourages participation
- There is openness among leaders
- They are tired and need new ideas

30% - Undecided

- Not sure if leadership of the church is open to participation of younger members but believe that Pastor.

11. Do you feel like young adults will serve effectively in leadership capacities?

Yes = 80%

No = 20%

12. Are young adults grounded enough to serve in leadership?

Yes = 65%

No = 35%

### **Summary of Learning**

At the conclusion of the sermon series and the bible study and discussions the Context Associates regrouped to gather and analyze the results from the surveys. The analysis revealed:

- The congregation is unsure if they are postured to receive new leadership
- Young Adults are not a part of the decision making body
- There is not enough young adult representation of the Steward/Trustee Boards.
- Young Adults feel that only liberal financial contributors are eligible for leadership positions.
- Adults do not think that young adults are grounded enough for significant leadership positions.

The context associates met together with the intention of addressing the issues revealed by the surveys. Our intentions were also to strategize and develop potential solutions to address each problem. The context associates also conducted interviews of young adult members that had the prowess of serving in leadership capacities to ensure that the voices were well represented and that we had physical individuals and not just paperwork. The individuals present were extremely candid with their observations of the current system and liberal with their suggestions for moving forward. We were also able to reiterate the purpose and the overall objective of developing a model that would strategically incorporate young adults into significant leadership positions while not offending other individuals who feel as if they have been “skipped” or passed over for those positions.

Financial contribution is only one factor in determining whether or not an individual is eligible to serve in leadership roles. In the Old Testament Jethro gave his son-in-law Moses some extraordinary advice concerning choosing leadership; chose trustworthy men, who love God and hate dishonest gain. It should be understood that supporting the vision financially is a major qualification, however having able bodied individuals with energy and 21<sup>st</sup> century ideas for expanding the ministry is also of equal importance. The presentations, sermons, discussions, and Bible study were also designed to facilitate meaningful progression toward the goal of inclusion of young adults. The teachings were also designed to present biblical and historical insight for congregants to understand the young adults in leadership is not a new phenomenon.

Most of the context associates approached the project with keen interest. There were two individuals were opposed to the depth of the study and simply suggested that

the pastor should make the appointments of young adult leaders and force the congregation to receive them. The suggestion was met with laughs, however the other associates explained the importance of not forcing anything on anyone, and being strategic in incorporating able-bodied individuals.

One associate also spoke on a salient point concerning the itinerant status of ministers in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Ministers are appointed to pastor particular churches for only one year. The changing of pastors can be specifically difficult when trying to incorporate new concepts. This context associate spoke on the importance of getting the congregation to “buy in” to younger leadership and not just force them because under a new pastor it is possible that it would be frowned upon. If the congregation and other leaders have a vested interest in the leadership that is appointed and feel as if they had a hand in grooming such leaders then the possibility would be greater for retaining young adult congregants.

The project showed positive changes in the post survey results. The information was refreshing to most of the individuals because they did not realize how much young adults have impact the church and society. The greatest percentage increase was seen in the openness of accepting those in leadership that were between the ages of twenty-one to thirty. After the sermons and the Bible study, the same survey questions were issued to participants who heard each message and who was also a part of the Bible study teaching and subsequent discussions. The intention was to see the effectiveness of the sermons and the Bible study and whether or not they were able to push the limits of the participants.

I observed significant increases in the understanding and openness of the participants. It would be remarkable if these individuals could lead the charge in making

sure the entire body was ready to receive these young leaders. The model of allowing young adults to shadow those in leadership now has proven to be particularly effective. This method exposes them to the intricate details of leading the church while at the same time giving them on the job training. The concept also exposes the young adult to the congregation because it is important that new leadership is highly visible to the congregation. As a matter of fact, the project would lose its potency if young adult leaders were not highly visible. Putting these individuals out front during meetings, worship experiences, offering, and other major events is almost paramount to the success of this project.

### **Recommendations**

The recommended model for incorporating young adults in significant leadership roles is as follows:

1. Activation - Seeking able bodied young adults that are already active within the church in other ministries. This will shine the light on a promotion motif. Rather than choosing individuals who have not been active at all and make them leaders, it would be more beneficial to bring forth for consideration those individuals who have been making their mark via young adult ministry, choir and usher ministries.
2. Communication and inclusivity - Seek the advice of the senior members who serve as Stewards and Trustees. It is imperative that they keep their eyes on individuals who they feel would serve effectively in leadership. Seeking the advice of several individuals would make the model more than the Pastor's idea.
3. Interviews - Interview potential young leaders. It is important to inquire concerning their understanding of the plight of their membership when it comes to being a leader. It is also important to ascertain whether or not they have a basic framework of understanding of the duties and responsibilities of serving in high-level positions. Undoubtedly there is a learning curve as well as lack of experience, but with the understanding of the basics, it gives the Pastor something to work with.

4. Shadowing - Couple a potential leader with a member that is already serving in leadership. Allow them to shadow them on offering count teams, in meetings and in worship. Shadowing will give on the job training necessary and help them gain experience.
5. Installation - A major installation service is a necessity. This service will introduce the new leaders to the congregation in major form. This service and the giving of certificates will help the congregation come to terms with the elevation of these individuals.

### **Conclusion**

The process of including young adults into leadership can be extremely beneficial to the future of the church. This project has shown that intentional preaching and teaching is important in shaping the minds of congregants for change. It is important that all individuals be exposed to historical and biblical revelation that reveals the strong ministry of young adults to the church and society. If the church is to be vibrant and relevant in the coming years it is important to commission able bodied young leaders to help keep the church in a continual posture of growth.



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